

★ February, 1938

The American Mercury



Gov. Earle of Pennsylvania	Eugene Pharo
Confessions of a New Dealer	Ex-Jobholder
Stalin: Portrait of a Degenerate	W. H. Chamberlin
Sports Writers Are Always Wrong	Eliot B. Spalding
The Genius of Audubon	John W. Thomason, Jr.
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XLIII

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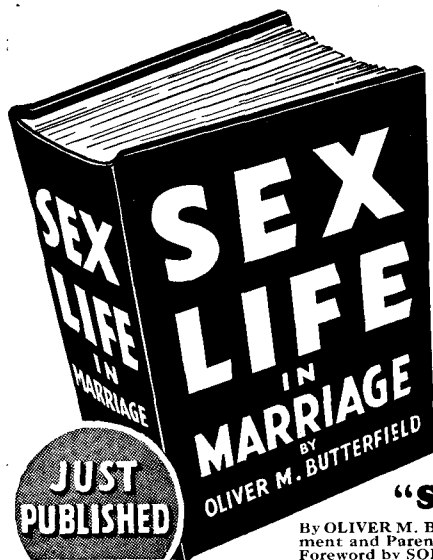
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The American MERCURY

THE CASE AGAINST THE LABOR BOARD

BY HAROLD LORD VARNEY

SO MANY of the bright visions of the New Deal have ended in disenchantment that it is depressing to record that another major Roosevelt experiment now seems headed for a tailspin. The latest nightmare is the National Labor Relations Board. Despite its smashing Supreme Court vindication last April, the NLRB is today probably the most unfriended body in Washington. The Wagner Act, once hailed by President William Green as the "Magna Carta" of American labor, now finds its bitterest critics in the ranks of union labor. Administrative agency of a law enacted "to diminish the causes of labor disputes", the Board's career has coincided with one of the worst epidemics of strikes and class-conflicts in American history.

The ultimate touch was given at Pittsburgh recently when even the convention of the Committee for Industrial Organization added its censure. In the face of such unanimity of dissatisfaction, something is obviously wrong.

Were the faults attributed to the Board simply the errors of inexperience, Chairman J. Warren Madden and his colleagues would, in fairness, be entitled to suspended judgment. Admittedly, they have been trail-blazers in a juridical field which is undefined and uncharted. That they would commit blunders was inescapable. Unfortunately, however, it is the growing conviction among their critics that the greater number of mistakes have arisen from bias rather than from inexperience. The gravamen of the

case against the Board was stated by the American Federation of Labor in a resolution adopted by the Denver convention last October:

The National Labor Relations Board has, together with and through a number of its Regional Boards, repeatedly denied employees the right of designating the bargaining unit, and have thereby denied employees the right of selecting representatives of their own choosing with full freedom. . . . [It] has attempted to destroy the validity of contracts entered into between legitimate organizations and their employees—in some instances with full knowledge of the facts involved, and in others without any apparent effort to ascertain the facts.

Such an indictment, if substantiated, is a very grave accusation indeed. A semi-judicial body, the Board is charged with tipping the scales in favor of one of the litigants. Established to further collective bargaining, it is accused of breaking down collective machinery which is already satisfactorily in operation. Such accusations, if justified by facts, would seem to give inescapable reasons for a reconsideration by Congress of the whole Wagner Act policy.

We undertake, in this article, a bird's-eye view of some of the more glaring faults which have revealed themselves in the Board's administration. We shall scrutinize the men and women who have been in-

vested with the vast powers of the NLRB, and then review some of the case histories which illustrate most convincingly the inadequacy of the present administrative apparatus.

The indisputable facts uncovered by this analysis, THE MERCURY believes, warrant an immediate Congressional investigation of the personnel and program of the NLRB. The following evidence is submitted for the guidance of such a Congressional inquiry.

II

Let us first examine the personnel of this Board which holds over both business and labor the absolute power of life and death. Are the officials to whom President Roosevelt has entrusted the vast authority of the Wagner Act commensurate in stature with their task? Do their backgrounds indicate an objective approach to the issues between Radical or Conservative unionism, or between employers and employees?

The first realization is that the President has collected a surprisingly mediocre group of men for a task of such far-reaching import. It will be recalled that President Wilson, in a parallel situation, felt it so important that his War Labor

Board have the moral authority of a distinguished personnel that he appointed as its chairman former President William Howard Taft. But who are the Tafts of the present body? It is a commentary upon their fitness that not one was known to the American public-at-large prior to appointment.

Chairman J. Warren Madden, the most publicized of the three appointees who comprise the National Labor Relations Board, was a professor of law at the University of Pittsburgh. In Pittsburgh he was known as a distinctly pro-labor lawyer, many of whose personal associations were with the local Left-wing intelligentsia. He had been a lieutenant of Governor Gifford Pinchot in the campaign to abolish the coal and iron police—an achievement which prepared the way for John L. Lewis' unionization of United States Steel. He had been one of three arbiters in the Pittsburgh street-car dispute in 1934. From such purely local distinctions, his leap to the supreme office in American industrial relations was a surprising coup. Technically, his appointment was sponsored by his fellow townsman, Senator Joe Guffey. But it has been reported that another Madden-recommender was Clinton S. Golden, veteran Left-winger and former

trustee of the Communist-controlled Garland Fund, who stepped from the Pittsburgh Regional Directorship of the NLRB to the Regional Secretaryship of the CIO.

From the technical standpoint, the Board member who seems best-qualified by previous experience is Edwin S. Smith. He alone, of his colleagues, may be described without humor as a labor expert. Before coming to Washington as a member of the old NRA Labor Board, Smith had been Commissioner of Labor and Industry for Massachusetts. His contact with labor problems reaches back to 1919 when he was an assistant of Miss Mary Van Kleeck in the industrial department of the Russell Sage Foundation. Subsequently, he spent years in employee-welfare work in the service of Henry S. Dennison, an early pioneer in industrial experiments, and with the Filene family of Boston.

Unfortunately, in his long journey to Washington, Smith accumulated an extensive retinue of job-hungry Left-wing friends. As a member of the Board, his influence has been almost consistently on the side of Radicalism. It is through his contrivance, it is said, that so disproportionate a number of Leftists have attained key offices with the Board. A comment on his personal

associations was made at the Denver AFL convention when John P. Frey asserted that at the very time when the CIO was in litigation before the Board, Smith had entertained John L. Lewis and a representative of the Russian Embassy at a private party in his Washington home. While he has carried himself with outward restraint since assuming the semi-judicial role of NLRB member, his Left sympathies have broken out in occasional manifestations, the most recent being his championship of the Reds in Spain (the *Daily Worker*, November 21, 1936), his recommendation that the La Follette Committee investigate patriotic organizations which are opposing Communism (the *New York Times*, April 4, 1936), and his angry protest against the curtailment of the Harvard contract of the two Leftist professors, J. Raymond Walsh and Allen R. Sweezy (the *New York Times*, April 7, 1937).

The third Board member, Donald Wakefield Smith, was an extraordinary Roosevelt selection. Madden and Edwin Smith had at least the recommendation of some previous work in the industrial relations field. Donald Wakefield Smith's background was that of an obscure lawyer who had handled

a few Bacon-Davis Law cases in the courts. There was a desperate scurrying in Washington newspaper offices to discover his identity when his appointment came over the wires. When the obliging publicity men at the Labor Board supplied the information, it appeared that his outstanding qualification was the fact that he was a nephew of the song-writer, Charles Wakefield Cadman. D. W. Smith's appointment has also been accredited to the egregious Senator Joe Guffey. While he appears to be more conservative in his social attitude than the other Smith, his advent has done little to raise the intellectual caliber of a Board already mediocre.

The subordinate appointees of the Board reflect the peculiar disqualifications of the men at the top. Generally speaking, the key employees comprise two almost invariable types: (1) convinced Leftists of all shadings of Radicalism: (2) young and ambitious lawyers of little court experience, who, without any clearly-defined Radical convictions, are opportunist enough to go along with the prevailing anti-business attitude of their superiors. Happily, the influence of the Leftists is balanced in some of the departments by the presence of such men

as Charles Fahy, Robert B. Watts, and others — old-time non-Radical Democrats, most of whom owe their jobs to the patronage mill.

The Leftist faction largely clusters around Edwin Smith. The most influential of the second-rankers is Nathan Witt, recently elevated to the Board's secretaryship. Witt is a Frankfurter alumnus and one of the coterie of young New Dealers who flocked to Washington with the Brain Trust during the Hundred Days. An assistant of Jerome N. Frank in the AAA before the "Left purge", he forged ahead rapidly after joining the Labor Board. As secretary, he is in a position to exercise immense authority.

Another Leftist who until recently held the important job of Chief Examiner in the Secretary's office was A. L. Wirin. He resigned to accept the position of Office Counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union. Heading another major department in the organization is David J. Saposs, Chief Industrial Economist. Saposs is a familiar figure in the New York Socialist movement. The author of *Left-Wing Unionism*, which he wrote for publication by the official Communist Party publishing house, he was long a teacher at Brookwood College, Katonah,

New York, which was repudiated by the AFL convention of 1928 as a Communist institution. At this convention, Matthew Woll, vice president of the AFL, described Saposs as one who "has shown the most extreme bias in behalf of Radical Left-wing doctrines and against the recognized principles and procedure of the AFL".

In the twenty-one Regional Boards throughout the country, key offices are similarly held in a number of districts by pronounced Leftists or Left sympathizers. At the Denver convention, Frey specifically charged that three of the Regional Directors — Mrs. Elinore M. Herrick of New York City, Dr. A. Howard Myers of Boston, and Mrs. Alice M. Rosseter of San Francisco — had exhibited such CIO partisanship as to merit dismissal from the government service. Mrs. Herrick, to cite the most conspicuous of the three, is probably the most unhappy selection which the Board could have made for a non-partisan executive post. And yet she wields almost unlimited control over the most important industrial district in the United States. An extremely clever Radical politician, she has bulwarked herself with such powerful local political support that it is doubtful if Madden himself could

oust her from the New York district, were he disposed to do so. She has been accused by the AFL of weighting the scales in favor of the Lewis faction in almost every important situation in her district where the AFL and the CIO have been in rivalry.

While Mrs. Herrick has been clever enough to avoid the stigma of actual membership in Leftist organizations, she has long been on the periphery of New York Radicalism. A pupil of William M. Leiserson at Antioch College, she joined the staff of the National Consumers' League in 1929, as a successor of Miss Frances Perkins. One of the vice presidents was Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. With this backing, she secured a post on the Labor Board during the NRA period and advanced rapidly to the Regional Directorship. In 1936 she fortified herself politically by taking a leave of absence to direct the drive for Roosevelt by the American Labor Party, an organization infiltrated by the CIO, plus the Communists. In 1937, in the LaGuardia mayoralty campaign, she again publicly identified herself with the political Leftists as a member of the Executive Committee of the ALP, this time without taking leave of her NLRB post. She is a frequent speaker before Leftist

audiences: to cite instances, on April 26, 1936, she was listed as one of the speakers at the dinner staged by *Woman Today*, a Communist-sponsored propaganda magazine, with Mother Bloor as chairman; while on April 9, 1937, at the height of the controversy between the AFL and CIO maritime unions, she appeared with Mervyn Rathbone, a "party-liner" and president of the American Communications Association of the CIO, at a meeting arranged by the Left-wing League of Women Shoppers. Her closeness to the Socialists was demonstrated by her acceptance of the chairmanship of the executive committee of the Trade Union Institute of the Socialist Rand School.

Such are, in abbreviated form, the records of some of the most potent figures in the NLRB organization. It will be well for the reader to bear these facts in mind when considering the actual case histories of labor disputes.

III

Let us now examine a few of the specific decisions in which NLRB favoritism to the CIO has seemed most apparent. We find that most of the interventions have occurred in those uneasy industries where John L. Lewis' agents are waging

warfare against established AFL internationals.

The embittered waterfront struggle between the International Seamen's Union (AFL) and the new CIO National Maritime Union is an arresting instance. Here we find the NLRB deliberately aiding a union which is not only CIO, but is also predominantly Communist in its control. It has done so in full knowledge that surrender of maritime labor to Communist leadership endangers the success of another vital government program into which Washington is pouring millions—the restoration of the American merchant marine.

Mrs. Herrick appears as the central figure in these dubious maneuvers. Although, under the Wagner Act, her duty, assumedly, is to protect collective bargaining, the AFL charges that she openly encouraged the Communist-Curran faction of the Seamen's Union to break away from an organization which already enjoyed contracts with the employers, and to form a rump union which nullified, by sit-downs and violence, established collective agreements. Without attempting to recite the long and complicated story, it should be noted that in 1934, the Atlantic Coast district unions of the AFL succeeded in negotiating

an agreement with the shipping lines, operative until January 1, 1938. Following this, Joe Curran, a newcomer in the union, with the support of the Communist element which had formerly maintained a dual organization, succeeded in negotiating a split among the membership. The rank and file had some genuine grievances against the AFL officers; the Communist faction cleverly exploited these issues while soft-peddalling their Communism. Curran demanded that the AFL treat with his faction as the official union. Of course, neither the AFL nor the shipping lines recognized his pretensions.

In the ordinary course of events, this would have been the end of Curran. His following, after a fitful career of insurgence, would have disintegrated and there would have been peace again in the union. But at this point, the NLRB intervened on Curran's side. In the Fall of 1936, it entertained a request from Curran for a hearing, looking to the abrogation of the contract between the official AFL unions and the lines. When a decision was reached to refer the struggle to the AFL Executive Council, and the Council recommended the holding of supervised elections, Curran's group opened negotiations to affiliate with the

CIO under the name of the National Maritime Union.

Mrs. Herrick's aid, it is charged by the AFL, turned the tide in favor of the Communist faction. The practical organizing problem in a seamen's union is to secure passes permitting union business agents to go on board ships and contact the crews. Without such passes, no independent group such as Curran's could successfully compete with the established unions. Since the AFL held contracts with the lines, only its representatives were entitled to passes. Into this situation, Mrs. Herrick precipitated herself. There are indications that she used the official pressure of the NLRB to induce the lines to issue the same number of passes to Curran's organization as to the recognized union. The effect was immediate. Instead of disappearing, the rump union shot up rapidly in membership, and was soon large enough to request the NLRB for elections.

These elections are now being held. The CIO has been victorious in most of the large pollings to date. When the AFL petitioned the NLRB for a brief postponement of the pollings until it had completed a reorganization of its old maritime unions, Curran and the CIO threatened direct action.

The quick capitulation of the Board before his threats was recounted by Curran in his organ, the *Pilot*. "But the threat of the National Maritime Union that any further delay would not be tolerated did the trick," he told his members, "and the Board denied the petition of the AFL". It is not an inspiring spectacle to see a government tribunal surrendering before such Communist threats.

Meanwhile, the spread of the NMU has had a paralyzing effect upon the nation's merchant-marine program. Insubordination, sabotage, and near-mutiny have followed in the wake of Curran. "Today," says Joseph B. Weaver, director of the Bureau of Navigation and Steamboat Inspection of the Department of Commerce, "the discipline and morale on our vessels is the lowest it has ever been, probably lower than that of any vessels of other flags."

It should be pointed out that as a matter of strategy, the NMU publicly denies its Communist identity. Curran himself probably is not a Communist Party cardholder, and the actual boss of the union, Roy Hudson, a member of the Communist Party Central Committee, is kept discreetly in the background. The actual internal situation in the union was disclosed

on December 23, 1937, when Frank Harris, a discharged organizer of the NMU, testified before Supreme Court Justice Black in New York that he had been required to pay dues and assessments to the Communist Party of \$5 a week in order to hold his \$45-a-week job, and that back pay had been withheld from him by the union because he could not show receipts for such payments from the Communist Party. It is revelatory that Curran speaks regularly, when asked, at the various "United Front" demonstrations which the Communists stage to support their Party Line causes. He has affiliated his NMU with the American League Against War and Fascism (the name has recently been changed to the more beguiling title, "The American League for Peace and Democracy"), the pivotal Communist propaganda organization in the United States. The use to which he plans to put the NMU, once it has been installed by the NLRB as the official representative of the seamen, was disclosed in an article which he recently wrote for a Communist-sponsored magazine, *Fight*:

I think the workers, and especially the seamen, are rapidly coming to the conclusion that the nation's foreign policy and domestic policy both, are their business. So much so, I believe, that they will come to feel that

their economic strength is to be used not only to win wage and hour demands. It can and should be used also to help shape the foreign and domestic policies of the government.

Which, when translated from Communist double-talk, means that in a future crisis, the NMU will use its "economic strength" of the strike, the picket-line, and the boycott to coerce the Department of State into foreign policies favorable to the interests of Soviet Russia. It is a grim reflection that this Communist-dominated organization, now moving fast toward a stranglehold on the nation's shipping, would probably be non-existent were it not for the open aid of the NLRB.

Another Communist-controlled union which has been installed in the strategic transportation industry of New York, with the bland acquiescence of Mrs. Herrick and the NLRB, and over the violent protests of both the AFL and Railway Brotherhoods, is the Transport Workers Union. In John Brophy's report to the CIO at Atlantic City, he claimed a membership for the TWU, in New York alone, of over 50,000. It has closed shop agreements with the I.R.T. subway, the B.M.T., with practically all the bus lines, and with half of the taxicab services of the city. In case of social disturbance, it is capable of par-

alyzing the transportation facilities of the nation's greatest metropolis overnight.

It is significant, in view of the NLRB acceptance of the Transport Workers Union, that its Communist control is a matter of public record. On August 22, 1937, the AFL made public an affidavit signed by Thomas O'Shea, the first president of the TWU, who was succeeded by Michael J. Quill, the present national president, in January, 1935. O'Shea asserted in his affidavit that both he and Quill, and Austin Hogan (alias Austin Dilloughery), who is now the local New York president of the TWU, were members of the Communist Party "fraction" inside the TWU, and that they faithfully followed the instructions of the Communist Party in their union policies. O'Shea charged that Quill assumed the presidency "at the dictation of the Communist Party of the United States, succeeding O'Shea who was ordered by the Communist Party, late in 1934, to relinquish the office in favor of Quill". When, in 1937, Quill ran successfully on Mrs. Herrick's American Labor Party ticket for City Councilman from the Bronx, his close understanding with the Communists was shown when three-fourths of the voters for

Begun, the official Communist candidate, indicated Quill as their second choice. In the face of such indisputable proofs, Quill and his party "fraction" associates have been certified by the NLRB as the labor dictators of New York transportation.

An AFL body which has felt the CIO bias of the NLRB with especial keenness is the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. An old and responsible Federation affiliate, the Brotherhood has had to face the competition of the Radical-led United Electrical and Radio Workers in scores of newly-organized industries. In two recent instances where the unions have clashed, the Board has actually annulled established AFL contracts, thus frustrating collective bargaining and precipitating turmoil in the industry, in defiance of the spirit of the Wagner Act. It is significant that these cases arose in the Pittsburgh and New York districts, where CIO favoritism has seemed to rule the regional offices.

The New York case was that of the Consolidated Edison Company, which had signed a contract with the IBEW giving it exclusive collective bargaining rights for its 30,000 employees. At the behest of a small group of CIO supporters, Mrs. Herrick appeared on

the scene with a complaint against the company. Six months after the contract had been put into effect, the NLRB issued a decision from Washington commanding the company to abandon the contract. While the Board was adamant that existing bargaining machinery must be scrapped, it offered no alternative program, and did not even recommend the holding of an employee election to replace the outlawed AFL. The skepticism of the Federation toward any such possible election was expressed by President Dan W. Tracy of the IBEW, who declared that the AFL "could not get a fair election with Mrs. Herrick fostering and promoting the organization of CIO unions in opposition to the AFL". At this writing, turmoil reigns as the result of NLRB intervention in an industry which had already achieved collective bargaining.

An even more high-handed procedure was followed by the Board in the case of the National Electric Products Company of Ambridge, Pennsylvania. Here the AFL had negotiated a signed agreement with the company, an agreement upheld by the U. S. District Court in Pittsburgh. Overruling the court, the NLRB, on petition of the CIO, declared the contract void on the ground that the AFL was fa-

vored only by a minority of the employees, and that the contract had been imposed by compulsion. An election was ordered. Had there been any justification for the Board's action, the CIO should easily have won the election, as the Ambridge city officials were strongly pro-CIO and gave full rein to organizers to conduct a spectacular pre-election campaign. But to the chagrin of the Board, the AFL was sustained by the employees. Even after this verdict, however, the NLRB still declined to certify the AFL as the exclusive bargaining agency, on the technical grounds that 155 votes were contested by the CIO. At this writing, the Board is withholding its decision.

Another AFL organization which has found Board officials aiding the CIO is the Boot and Shoe Workers Union. The CIO unit in this industry is the United Shoe Workers, whose membership includes most of the Radical elements which formerly comprised the old Independent Shoe Workers, a unit of the Communist Trade Union Unity League. A typical case in this industry was the Lennox Shoe Company hearing at Freeport, Maine. Here the AFL had a closed-shop agreement with the company, concluded after the

signing up of 600 of 640 employees. Professional CIO organizers put pressure upon the Regional Board which, in New England, is headed by Dr. A. Howard Myers, a former assistant of the Socialist, Sidney Hillman. Myers attempted to persuade the AFL to consent to a re-opening of labor dissension by the holding of an employee election. When the AFL refused, Myers ordered a hearing, and sent to Freeport as trial examiner one Irving G. McCann, who had been quoted as having boasted that his appointment on the NLRB staff was arranged by John L. Lewis. An investigation of this Freeport hearing, later conducted by a committee of the Massachusetts State Federation of Labor, revealed that the hearings were a CIO field day. McCann opened the proceedings with a statement which was prejudicial to the AFL and favorable to the CIO, but when the Federation counsel attempted to have this statement included in the record, the move was denied. A key witness for the Federation, the village stationmaster, was not permitted to testify. The final outcome of the confusion was the closing of the Freeport plant by the Lennox Company, and the loss of jobs to all workers involved.

In St. Louis, the Interna-

tional Brotherhood of Boilermakers (AFL) had a similarly unhappy experience with over-zealous NLRB officials. Both the CIO and the AFL had membership among the employees of the Heine Boiler Company. The larger body was in the AFL, which had taken over a former company union. The CIO appealed to the Regional Board, which ordered an election to determine the exclusive representative. When the ballots were prepared, the Board refused to place the name of the AFL on the ballot. The employees were given the single choice of a Yes or No decision on the CIO. The vote resulted in an overwhelming No. But when, following this vote, the company indicated that it would be willing to halt strife by granting recognition to the AFL, the Board refused to permit such a contract and insisted that the employees must go through another election.

In fairness to the many conscientious employees of the NLRB, it should be made clear that the cases cited here are not offered with the intent to prove that all NLRB decisions have been similarly one-sided. Fortunately, the staff members are not all Herricks or McCanns. There have been impartial hearings and adjudications by the less-publicized officers of the

Board. But unhappily, under the present régime in Washington, a sufficient number of Leftist-sympathizers and CIO partisans have penetrated the key positions in the organization to give their color to the work of the whole staff. The success of the Wagner Act experiment has been endangered by this lunatic fringe. Nor does there seem to be any awareness of the public revulsion against such incidents by the three Board members at Washington.

IV

When we pass from the field of inter-union rivalry to situations where the CIO competitor is an independent plant union, the CIO bias of the NLRB becomes open and unashamed. Political considerations exercise some restraint on anti-AFL attitudes: after all, the Federation, despite Lewis' claims, is still a powerful political machine and an integral part of Roosevelt's electoral majority. But no such inhibition applies to local independent employee-organizations, which have no spokesmen in Washington. It is the practice of Left-minded NLRB officials to make short shrift of such organizations when they stand in the way of John L. Lewis.

One company which found itself between the millstones of such a conflict was the Inland Steel Company of Chicago. With its employees divided between the CIO and an independent union, the company soon found itself in the toils of the Labor Board. For seventeen weeks, it was subjected to wearisome and expensive public hearings. An examination of the transcript of these hearings discloses an almost unbelievable pro-CIO attitude on the part of Board officials. In the early sessions, the "asides" and "off record" remarks of the Trial Examiner, Charles W. Wood, became so offensive that the Inland attorneys, in self-protection, brought their own stenographer to take down the complete proceedings. Wood angrily commanded the newcomer to make no notes of any "off record" statements. When the stenographer insisted that no such limitation could be placed on a public hearing, he was physically ejected from the court, the company counsel walking out with him. An appeal was made to Washington, and only after Wood had been overruled were the hearings resumed.

Although the CIO, then at the height of its arrogance in the Chicago steel district, was systematically terrorizing employee-wit-

nesses who appeared for the independent union, the Board officials made no effort to rebuke this practice nor to extend protection to non-CIO witnesses. On the contrary, one of the attorneys for the Board actually turned over to the CIO the complete list of 1001 company and independent union witnesses who were on the subpoena list, in advance of their appearance at the hearings. The way the CIO then "worked" upon these prospective witnesses is instanced by the testimony of one Pruziecki:

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Pruziecki, did anybody call at your home?

Witness: Yes, sir.

Mr. Burnham: Who?

Witness: Two fellows from the CIO.

Mr. Burnham: Do you know their names?

Witness: No sir, I do not know their names, but I would know them if I would see them.

Mr. Burnham: What did these men say to you?

Witness: Well, they told me that if I get called as a witness in Chicago that I shouldn't talk against the CIO, and if I get caught in a lie that they will put me across the road for six months.

The bitterness of the Trial Examiner towards the company counsel finally culminated in a "false statement" charge against Mr. Burnham, a distinguished member of the Chicago bar. But near the end of the trial, obviously uneasy over the bad publicity

which might result from a revelation of his courtroom bullyragging, Mr. Wood called the company counsel before him for an amazing "off-record" conference and proposed to them a bargain. "I will make a statement at the close of this case as to conduct of counsel," he warned, "unless counsel are in a position to assure me that they do not intend to attack the record on prejudice and on statistics." Unfortunately for Mr. Wood, the company counsel, smarting from seventeen weeks of insolence, were indisposed to give any such assurance. At this writing, the Inland case is still before the Board.

One incredible decision of the Board, involving an independent union, actually established the precedent that a company does not have the right, under the Wagner Act, to discharge employees whom the courts have found guilty of serious property offenses in a sit-down strike, and that the company must even pay such culprits full back wages for the time when they had been adjudged to be in illegal activities. This decision was handed down in the much publicized Fansteel case. It is particularly interesting because it presents a parallel to the NLRB attitude in the publicized Ford Motor case, now before the courts.

The Fansteel hearings grew out of the seizure last February of the plant in North Chicago, Illinois, by ninety-four striking CIO employees who, after defying a court order, were evicted by tear-gas. Thirty-nine of these "direct actionists" were afterwards convicted and either fined or imprisoned by the local Circuit Court. Under the guidance of Trial Examiner Tilford E. Dudley, the NLRB proceedings developed into a vindication of the sit-downers. Counsel for the company were hampered throughout by his rulings. Dudley interrupted them repeatedly in their cross-examination of the CIO witnesses, interposing questions or permitting counsel for the Board to do so. Counsel for the company were sharply limited when they attempted to bring out evidence concerning the use of violence and other illegal acts in the sit-down strike, while Board counsel were allowed unlimited scope. The key point in dispute at the hearings was the claim of the CIO that it had enrolled a majority of the employees. To prove this assertion, company counsel asked for the right to subpoena union records and bring them into court. As long as the hearings were in progress, Dudley refused to issue such a sub-

poena. But after the final adjournment, when all witnesses had been heard and dismissed, he reconvened the hearings three hours later, and announced soberly that he had received authorization from Washington to issue such a subpoena, and that the union records were in court. Of course the records were then valueless to the company counsel, unless they were willing to try the whole case over again. Obviously, Dudley was concerned that the trial record should show that, technically, he had required the production of the records, while timing the subpoena so that they would be of no aid to the company. The incident was typical of his procedure throughout.

The recommendation which Dudley submitted to the Board was that the company must reinstate sixty-seven sit-downers, pay them back-wages totalling \$70,000, withdraw recognition from the Rare Metal Workers Union, an independent union claiming the majority of the employees, and extend recognition to the CIO. The case is now before the Board.

The Yale and Towne case in Stamford, Connecticut, although it had the unusual ending of victory for the independent union, likewise ran the gantlet of open CIO partisanship by NLRB officials.

Here we have the spectacle of the Board attempting to repudiate its own supervised election, when it found an independent union victorious over the CIO. The misuse of Board power in this instance was so notorious that Representative Alfred N. Phillips, a New Deal Liberal, was constrained to write President Roosevelt, characterizing the hearings as "a farce and a disgrace" and calling upon the President "to eject from association with the NLRB all of those responsible for turning judicial hearings into one-sided prosecutions, as well as to purge the Board of further relationship with Communists".

The attitude of the Board in this case was particularly inexplicable in view of the long record of Yale and Towne as a liberal-minded employer. Here collective bargaining was not a novelty. As long ago as 1919, the company had voluntarily instituted an Industrial Council to give its employees a voice in labor relations. When the Supreme Court decision on the Wagner Act outlawed employer participation in such plans, the company dismantled collective machinery which had stood the test of eighteen years. Observing the full letter of the law, the employees proceeded to organize an inde-

pendent union—the Yale and Towne Employees Association—to replace the disbanded Council.

Meanwhile, the inevitable CIO organizer had appeared and, aided by a small nucleus of local Radicals, waged a raucous sound-truck campaign before the factory gates. Eventually, he accumulated a following. Whereupon he served notice on the management that the CIO wished to be recognized as the exclusive employee representative. At about the same time, the Yale and Towne Employees Association made the same request, and the company indicated to both that it would be willing to submit the matter to a supervised election.

Mrs. Herrick's office in New York, apparently in close touch with the CIO organizer, now entered the situation with a request for a conference to arrange such an election. When the executives arrived at Mrs. Herrick's office, they found to their surprise, four representatives of the CIO, but no representative of the Employees Association. She opened the conference with the suggestion that the company recognize the CIO forthwith, to avoid the trouble of an election. The company representatives asked her about the Association. "Oh," she replied, "is there another organization?" At that mo-

ment Mrs. Herrick had in her files the request of the Association for an election—a communication whose receipt she had acknowledged in writing. After some further parleys, in which Mrs. Herrick supported the CIO demand for an almost immediate election, the date was set for June 3, 1937, with both unions on the ballot. The poll proved a Waterloo for the CIO. With Major John D. Moore of the NLRB supervising, the employees gave their decision to the Association. On June 5th, the company received the certification of the election from Mrs. Herrick, which established the Association as the exclusive representative.

But if the company had any expectation that the CIO would feel bound by a majority decision, it was due for a speedy disillusioning. Mrs. Herrick had another ace in the hole. The ink was scarcely dry upon the certification when Yale and Towne received another notice from the NLRB stating that the CIO had filed charges contesting the election on the ground that the company had circulated “malicious rumors” against the CIO. No agreement should be made with the Association, instructed Mrs. Herrick, until hearings had determined the truth of the charges.

The hearings which followed were the usual CIO rubber stamp. The Trial Examiner, Paul Davier, was sitting on his first case since his appointment, and in his inexperienced way he faithfully reflected the prevailing temper of Mrs. Herrick’s office. David Moscovitz, who handled the case for the Labor Board, was largely guided by Samuel Gruber, Stamford Radical leader, who was attorney for the CIO. It was Gruber who rounded up witnesses, coached them in their testimony, and prepared the papers for the Board. Throughout the hearings, he sat at Moscovitz’s right hand.

That the charges were merely a subterfuge by the CIO to avoid compliance with the election was soon patent from Moscovitz’s and Gruber’s evidence. The central witness for the CIO, an eighteen-year-old apprentice boy, was caught in such blatant perjury that Moscovitz recalled him to the stand to correct his testimony, at which time he proceeded to tell another story as fantastic as the first. And although his story was contradicted by the testimony of eighteen reputable fellow employees, it was accepted by Davier as the basis for his findings against the company. As was foreseen, the Examiner returned a report recom-

mending that the election be declared null and void—a recommendation now before the Board. Thus the CIO has a chance to win even when it loses.

V

But for an exhibition of concentrated, double-distilled malevolence against independent unionism, we must turn to the case of Weirton Steel. Here we find a streamlined demonstration of what the National Labor Relations Board can actually do when it decides to GET an employer. We see also a revelation of the greased teamwork between the Labor Board, the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee, the CIO, and the Radicals when a real showdown comes.

Since the beginning of their steel industry drive, the continued immunity of Ernest T. Weir to Lewisized trade-unionism had been a hair-shirt to the leaders of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee. Weir's experience presented a disturbing example to other steel manufacturers who were on the CIO's high-pressure list for signed contracts. It became a matter of urgency to CIO strategy either to organize Weirton Steel, or to conduct such a smearing campaign

against Weir's labor policies as to minimize their public importance as a symbol of successful independent unionism. The smearing technique was the one adopted.

In the Weirton episodes, there is indubitable indication of an elaborate plan to condition the public mind. The first intimation of what was ahead was the flood of anti-Weir articles which began to appear in the Communist-controlled and Left-wing press about two years ago. With true Radical publicity instinct, the writers invented an almost perfect smear phrase, "The Hatchet Gang". By steady reiteration, the impression was implanted that CIO unionism was unsuccessful in Weirton, not because the employees were indifferent but because the company maintained a private army of thugs, "The Hatchet Gang", which terrorized all prospective union-joiners. The purely fictitious character of this Radical invention was exposed in the subsequent NLRB hearings when the Board attorneys, with all their power of subpoena, attempted to prove the existence of such "hatchet men" with humiliating success. As a publicity plant, however, the fiction had already achieved its desired effect of convincing millions of headline-readers that there was something

wrong in Weirton, West Virginia.

While the public mind was thus being conditioned, the CIO was in Weirton attempting to drum up membership. It was not an easy task. Early in 1933, the company had installed an extremely popular employees representation plan. Later, when the Wagner Act decision required company withdrawal from participation in such organizations, the Weirton Employees' Security League was organized by the employees themselves. Its present membership is above 8000, of a total of 12,000 workers. For militant, class-conscious unionism in the CIO sense there was little if any market, outside the few local Radicals and the usual sprinkling of ne'er-do-wells. For one thing, the outside organizers found a baffling lack of grievances among the Weir employees. The average Weirton wage was \$38.49 per week, with a surprisingly large number of skilled men accustomed to pay checks in three figures. The CIO chatter about "wage slavery" fell upon unsympathetic ears in such a community.

As in all steel cities, however, some malcontents were to be found. A local CIO leader was appointed in the person of Kenneth Koch, a young man of outspoken

Socialist sentiments who had been a student at Brookwood College (then under the business management of Clinton S. Golden). One of Koch's chief assistants was Mike Jurich, who had been denied American citizenship as an avowed Communist. Lacking local encouragement, Koch followed the usual CIO procedure of bringing in professional assistants from outside. There were unmistakable signs that all his work from the beginning was planned from Pittsburgh. One individual active from the outset was Miss Rose M. Stein, veteran Pittsburgh Socialist and writer for the *Nation*, the *Fight*, and other Leftist publications. When the NLRB hearings began, the company counsel noted with amusement that it was possible to tell, with almost mathematical accuracy, when the Board lawyers were planning a coup by the unfailing appearance of Miss Stein in the press box. In general command of the situation, of course, was Golden, the CIO Regional Secretary, who as the former Regional Director of the NLRB was able to enlist invaluable co-operation from the Board in the "smear" drive. Another agency which faithfully made its appearance on the scene, in preparation for the third act, was the La Follette Civil Liberties

Committee,¹ which conducted heavily-publicized "investigations" of "The Hatchet Gang" with assistance from Koch and his coterie.

In any body of 12,000 employees, it is not difficult for an organization with as much money to spend as the SWOC, to find aggrieved men who would give the Board a technical pretext for intervention. On July 31, 1937, the NLRB made its long-expected complaint charging intimidation of employees and company domination of their organization. Hearings were set for August 16. While some of the steam was taken out of this coup by a demonstration of 8000 employees on the preceding day, protesting against the Board's action, the hearings quickly got under way in an atmosphere of unconcealed NLRB hostility to the company and all its works.

The cast which was assembled to humble Ernest T. Weir was a typical Labor Board troupe. On the bench as Trial Examiner was the aged Edward Grandison Smith, a throwback to the Bryan days, who, through the last forty years, had been an unsuccessful candidate for

almost every important office in West Virginia. In the limelight at last, "Judge" Smith made the most of his opportunity. One of the local newspapers made it a practice, for a time, to keep score on the Smith rulings. At the last tabulation, the tally read:

Weirton Steel Counsel—Motions Overruled	592
Motions Sustained	62
Labor Board Counsel—Motions Overruled	21
Motions Sustained	40

Before he had been long on the case, the Smith reactions had become so automatic that one afternoon, suspecting the "Judge" to be asleep, William T. Fahey, counsel for the Security League, coughed loudly to attract his attention. "Objection overruled!" blurted the suddenly awakened Examiner. So forceful were his rulings throughout the inquisition that before the hearings had reached the halfway mark, he had already shattered two marble slabs under his valiant gavelings.

When we turn to the legal battery which the NLRB brought to Weirton, we find two common characteristics in all—youth and crusading New Dealism. Apparently strongly impregnated with the conviction of the inherent viciousness of American capitalism, they saw their performances

¹ In the *Fight*, March, 1937, Henry Zon, a Leftist writer, gives away the connection between the La Follette Committee and the CIO drive by revealing that John L. Lewis was among the fifteen present at the Cosmos Club meeting in Washington in February, 1936, when the plan to ask Congress to set up such a committee was hatched.

in Weirton against the murk background of the class-struggle. This partisan attitude was particularly observable in the case of Allen Heald, thirty-two-year-old chief counsel. Before coming to Weirton, Heald had distinguished himself in the Mansfield Mills hearings in Lumberton, North Carolina, where the company was pronounced guilty for the heinous offense of disturbing a leaflet entitled, *The Truth About the Wagner Labor Law*.

To an almost equal degree this partisanship was evident in the attitudes of John W. Porter, assistant counsel, whose health broke under the strain of his anti-Weir labors. After he departed his place was taken by Isidor Polier, son-in-law of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise and an American Civil Liberties Unionist.

To prove terrorism in Weirton, these legal luminaries proceeded to stage as preposterous a performance of hearsay rumors, unsupported accusations, and obviously coached non-English-speaking witnesses as have ever passed before a supposedly serious tribunal. To cite only one instance of the credibility of the accusers, consider the testimony of James Apostolos, Greek-speaking CIO member. The NLRB case largely hung on Apos-

tolos' story that a Weirton foreman had made a speech to the employees in his department, declaring that "if you are not more than ninety per cent with the company, you are going to lose your jobs". The expedient with which Clyde A. Armstrong, chief counsel for the Weirton Company, revealed the fact that Apostolos had been merely parroting a statement which somebody had drilled into him, was as devastating a bit of cross-examination as was heard in Weirton. Having first brought out that the foreman alleged to have made the speech could not possibly have made the statement in Greek, Armstrong had the interpreter repeat in English to Apostolos the exact words which he alleged the foreman to have spoken. "I don't understand you," the witness muttered helplessly. The same technique was used with like effect on several other Greek-speaking witnesses who had been most positive in their accusations.

An example of the kind of testimony which fills the record is found in the attempt of Labor Board counsel to prove an assault on Paul Rusen, SWOC organizer, by "The Hatchet Gang". Rusen offered only his bare assertion, declaring that while there were witnesses, he would not give their

names because "people" had told him that their houses would be "blown up" if they testified. And yet without insisting on proof the Examiner permitted this damaging allegation against the company to be put in the record.

A prize witness whom Porter offered as a link in his chain of proof of company intimidation was one Patrick Todoran, Greek-speaking local Radical and former Weirton employee. The high light of his testimony was as follows:

Porter: Now, Mr. Todoran, did anyone ever approach you with the suggestion that you give up your activities?

Todoran: Yes, sir. (Questioned in regard to date.)

Todoran: In 1936. And in that time, why, the fellow came to see me and he said Mr. Siedenberg (manager of the strip mill) —

Armstrong: Just a minute. That is objected to unless the witness identifies the party. It is also objected to as hearsay.

Smith: The objection is overruled.

Porter: Go ahead, Mr. Todoran.

Todoran: And send me over to see you and explain you all about that. He said, 'Mr. Siedenberg know you well.' He said, 'Some way they — everybody knows you from Weirton Steel.' 'Why,' he told me, he said, 'Now,' he said, 'you unemployed.' Which I was discharged from the WPA for political activity and part WPA — I mean Workers Alliance lodge. And they said, 'You have a family — you have children.' 'And,' he says, 'if you will stay away from CIO and give it up and won't

do nothing', that is all they ask me, not to do anything, 'do nothing'. Stay home, sit down. And they will give you a new car, and they will give you \$10 a day and stay home and don't do nothing. Stay away from CIO. Throw the Workers Alliance in the ditch and don't do nothing. Stay away entirely from labor.

To the end, the identity of Todoran's mysterious "he" and "they" who so generously offered new cars to WPA workers remained a guarded secret.

As this article is written the Weirton hearings are still dragging wearily onward after four months of similar ghost stories. The final issue of an unfavorable report by "Overruling" Smith is a foregone conclusion among those who have tasted the atmosphere of the inquisition.

VI

From such typical case histories, it is possible to approach a diagnosis of what is actually wrong with the Labor Board. The initial fault, of course, stems back to the Wagner Act itself. The glaring inequities of its administration merely reflect the partisan spirit of this unbalanced statute. Only a drastic amendment of the Act itself will put the halter upon the Left-wing administrators, under whose shap-

ing, collective bargaining has become a pogrom against American capitalism.

We can now see that a serious mistake was made in the Wagner Act in clothing the Board with such broad discretionary authority. In application, the Act has revealed an unforeseen vagueness and inexactitude in some of its basic provisions. Such ambiguity has opened the door to a wide extension of Board authority in directions not contemplated. This has been sharply exhibited in the vexatious conflict between the AFL and the CIO. In empowering the Board to define the collective bargaining unit in each instance—whether craft or industrial—the law has actually given this unseasoned body the final voice in the raging controversy between craft and industrial unionism. The decisions of the NLRB may conceivably remake the American trade-union movement. Obviously, no such purpose was contemplated in the enactment of the Wagner Act. In the present temper of the AFL, an attempt to retain this prerogative may cost the Labor Board its existence. That the Board is conscious of its danger is seen in its recent bending to the AFL wind in its Allis Chalmers decision, to which Edwin S. Smith entered his caustic

minority dissent. But can such vital decisions be safely left to the caprice of political expediency?

Likewise, the language of the Act has left a distressing vagueness over what is meant by a “majority” of the employees. In practice, the Board has followed two rules in defining a majority. In most instances, it has required that a union demonstrate the affiliation of a majority of the eligible employees, to be recognized as the exclusive bargaining agent. But in other cases, the Board has certified the union (usually the CIO) when it had a majority of those participating in the election, but not a majority of the total eligible employees in the plant. A notorious instance was the Associated Press decision of July 5, 1936. Here, with 188 employees eligible to vote, eighty-one cast their votes for the Newspaper Guild and thirty in opposition. The Guild had a minority of the total number of employees, but Mrs. Herrick certified it as the exclusive representative.

A worse instance was the Radio Corporation of America vote in Camden, New Jersey, in 1936. Here, because of strike incidents which suggested NLRB favoritism for the CIO, the independent union boycotted the election. Of 9752 employees eligible to vote,

only 3163 ballots were recorded. The CIO unit received 3016. Regional Director Root certified it as the exclusive agent.

Against this tolerance in instances where Left-wing unions were involved, we have the contrary action of the Board in the Chrysler Corporation case where an independent union won a minority election. With 700 employees eligible, only 125 choices were recorded, with 121 of these favoring the independent union. With a justice which was strangely missing in the almost identical R.C.A. case, the Board *refused to certify any organization*. Obviously, NLRB elections will have little binding authority in industry if the Board is permitted to have elastic rules to define results.

An even thornier question is posed by the manifest evils of the present "hearings" system. This article has pointed out some of the glaring faults of the prevailing technique. It is important to note that the concept of "hearings" as employer prosecutions, in which the Board representatives, instead of taking impartial fact-finding attitudes, identify themselves with the union case against the employer, is not prescribed in the Wagner Act. It is a procedure which has been superimposed

upon the Act by the Board. As we have seen, it places the employer in an unequal position in the proceedings: his guilt is assumed, not only by the complaining union, but by the Board counsel, and even by the Trial Examiner who specifies the rules. In such an inquiry the Board is seeking not objective truth, but convicting evidence to confirm a predetermined assumption of the employer's guilt. Such findings are expedited by the Wagner Act provision that in the hearings, "the rules of evidence prevailing in courts of law and equity shall not be binding", and by the further provision that merely "evidence" — not, as in ordinary legal language, "a preponderance of evidence", is required for a "conclusive" decision against the employer.

The odds against employer vindication in a district where the regional officers are frankly pro-labor is seen in the statistics issued by Mrs. Herrick covering her cases in the period from October 1, 1936, to June 30, 1937.¹ Of forty-three cases submitted to the National Board after hearings, "the decision was in favor of the employer in only one complaint". In twenty-four cases, the employer was found guilty, one case was

¹ The New York Times, July 28, 1937.

dropped by the union, and elections or other procedure were prescribed for the remaining seventeen. Obviously, such an outcome is not a fair reflection of the realities of industrial relations. But under a hearings system which the Liberal Senator Nye has aptly characterized as the "kangaroo court", such a result is fore-ordained.

Another manifest weakness of the present Act is the exclusive privilege which it gives to labor to petition for an election. That such a provision is admittedly juggled is shown by the recent reversed policy of the New York State Labor Relations Board which now gives equal petition privileges to both employer and employee in intra-State controversies. The present policy gives to labor the all-important privilege of timing the election to coincide with the maximum strength of the union in the plant. Such an unbalanced privilege defeats democracy, instead of achieving it. An instance of the social loss resulting from such policy was seen in the General Motors strike in 1937. The company was willing to end the chaos by holding an employee election. But the CIO, knowing that it would be defeated, steadfastly vetoed the proposal.

Likewise, there can be little hope

of satisfactory adjudication by the Board as long as the Wagner Act specifies unfair labor practices by the employer without corresponding specification of unfair practices by unions. The obvious assumption behind the Act is that trade unionism holds a privileged status denied the employer. The hand of the law is to regulate the employer's labor decisions, but the union is to function in an anarchic world outside the zone of public regulation. When, as in the case of the Fansteel sit-downers, the State courts intervene to punish illegal practices of unionists, the Board Examiner throws the sheltering garments of the Federal Government around them, and fines the employer.

Similarly, there is need for a clearer stipulation in the Act governing the right of the employer to discharge incompetent and insubordinate workers. The present provisions permit the blackmail of the employer by malingering employees. Workers facing discharge for incompetence or insubordination have only to join the union, and they become undischARGEABLE. Or bona fide union men, feeling their jobs to be protected by the union, may become negligent. In some cases, the union is willing to co-operate with the employer in

imposing discipline. But in factories where the union is deliberately seeking a pretext for the filing of complaints with the Board, the discharge of such useless employees becomes an instance of "anti-union discrimination". Once such employees are put on the stand in Board hearings, as at present conducted, it is virtually impossible for the employer to establish the fact that their unionism was not a factor in their discharge.

In the Weirton hearings, virtually the whole case of the CIO hinged upon 100 or so of the least competent employees in the plant who had been laid off, after their records had been studied by the Employee Representatives, when the scrapping of an old hot mill required a reduction in the force. Even these 100 were given the opportunity to secure work on a company construction project. But most of them preferred to go to the CIO and the Board and protest that their discharge was due to union activities. When the Weirton counsel attempted in the hearings to disprove the assertions by demanding proof, they were invariably overruled and the bare statement of the witnesses admitted to the record.

As it stands today, the Wagner Act is appallingly far from that

"better relationship between management and labor" which President Roosevelt hailed when he signed it. Under the ministrations of the present Labor Board, it has become solely a law to impose involuntary trade-unionism upon industry. As such, it is class-unionism in the most egregious sense of the word, and its enforcement can only be predicated upon the continuance of a partisan pro-labor Administration in power. Such a continuance cannot be safely assumed by organized labor.

If American labor is wise, it will make haste to safeguard its Wagner Act gains by the voluntary acceptance of the just demands of management for a better-balanced Act. By such a strategic retreat from its present untenable position, it can insure itself against the greater danger of the eventual repeal of the whole experiment. Today, American industry, chastened by the Supreme Court defeat, has reconciled itself to a legalized status for collective bargaining. It is thinking in terms of compromise with trade unionism. Labor will make a disastrous mistake if, in this interlude of good feeling, it goads industry back into its mood of open-shoppism by transforming the Wagner Act from a whip into a scorpion.

HELP WANTED

BY MARTHA WITTE

THE alarm clock is set for 4:30 A.M. It is not quite 5 o'clock when we reach the bakery. We expected to be the first ones, yet two girls are already standing in front of the door. We join them.

Nobody is on the street, all the houses are dark. Now and then footsteps are heard, coming nearer and nearer; a dim figure appears and stops at the bakery. Another "job-hunter". We do not speak to each other; we just stand there, determined not to let anyone take our place—the third—in front of the door. The footsteps become more frequent, more dim figures join us. We now form a line of ten. A clock strikes 5:30. A milk wagon comes down the street. The driver calls something and laughs. Nobody answers. The clock strikes 5:45. Our line has ten new figures. It is so dark that we cannot distinguish the faces, but we see the newspaper and the little package which each figure carries. The package with the apron. We are lost without the apron. Suppose we should be lucky enough to get the

job—we should have to put on the apron and start to work right away. If we can't—if we have no apron—well—goodbye then, the next one please.

At last it is 6 o'clock. A woman in white uniform appears from the door next to the store. She rattles keys.

"Make room so that I can open the door," she says, not unkindly.

Nobody moves. The first two in line do not want to give up their places. Maybe they will not get them back.

"Make room, I say!"

This time the voice sounds impatient. We must not make this woman angry—and so we do some pushing and shuffling until the key is in the lock and the door thrown open.

"Easy, easy," says the woman, turning on the lights in the bakery. "One after the other. Who was here first?"

A big fat girl steps up. We look at her in disgust. We hate her because she is the first in line and probably will have the best chance.

The woman takes her into a corner and they talk. We others remain, huddled together at the door. The woman and that fat one — oh, we hate her — talk and talk.

"She's got the job," suddenly one says. "No use waiting." She walks out of the door.

"No use waiting." Another walks out, followed by two more. But we are tougher: we wait and watch. It is not certain yet that she's got the job. But now the woman nods her head, and the girl takes off her hat and coat. We don't wait for the woman to come down to us and say "I'm sorry." We shamle out in a hurry.

What now? It is still dark. Well, we should have a cup of coffee. In the cafeteria we scan the ads once more. Here is a perfume factory looking for help; here is a plant that wants 100 women for packing, Gods knows what. Well, Elizabeth will go to the perfume place, and I shall try the packing plant. Lord, 100 women! . . . There should be a chance. Besides, it is early, not even 7 o'clock, and the factories don't open before 8.

"Good luck! And if we don't get the job, we'll meet on Sixth Avenue."

If the newspapers fail there is Sixth Avenue left as a hope.

II

It is not easy for me to find the factory far downtown, and I lose much time asking and looking for it. At last! It is a long, low, dirty building with something like a shed-entrance in the center, closed. I feel my heart dropping at the sight of that long line of women and girls, winding like a big serpent along the building. I take my place at the end of the serpent — and in a few moments I am not the last one. The serpent grows and grows. Old women — young women — young girls — women without hats — women in fur coats — women in rags. They talk. I listen.

"I worked here last week," says one. "Monday we started packing and Friday we were through. At noontime. We got our money. There was nothing more, they said. That's how they do it. They save one and a half day's wages and put another ad in the paper Monday."

"Then it isn't steady?"

"Steady, my eye! Where do you find anything steady nowadays?"

The conversation goes on until two men emerge from the shed-entrance. One wears an apron over his pot-belly, the other smokes a cigar. They pass remarks while

they are watching us and laugh. We are growing impatient and start to press and shuffle. Voices are heard: "Come on, open the door!" "We are losing too much time waiting!" It is true. Waiting here we may miss a chance somewhere else. The men do not pay the slightest attention; they laugh and talk. Now pot-belly looks at his watch, and the man with the cigar opens the door and steps inside. A mob of women wallow after him.

"Stop!" pot-belly yells. "That's enough."

He slams the door, barricading it with his back. He stares into the air motionless. It takes a long time until life returns to him and he opens the door again. A second throng flows inside. I *have* to be in this throng. I must get inside with this second mob. I push—squirm—press—one more step and I'll reach the goal. I stretch my arm and my hand clutches the door post. One more step and I'll have made it. Bang! A fist hits my chest.

"Stop!" yells pot-belly.

I have hardly time to withdraw my hand before the door slams in my face.

Well, I did not succeed this time. But next time—it's a cinch. I'll be the first to enter. No need to be nervous now. It's a cinch.

I wait patiently—even though it takes an awfully long time until the door opens. Longer than before. In fact, much longer. Now—be ready! But what's this? The door opens only a crack. A hand appears with a white paper slip. Pot-belly takes it and speaks through the crack. Lord, that paper slip makes one nervous. What does it say? Pot-belly holds it so that I can't read it.

"What does it say?" women ask me.

Pot-belly stops talking. "Just a moment." He pushes us away—and then he puts the slip on a nail at the door. The nail must be there on purpose, for this slip of paper.

"NOBODY WANTED."

That's what it says, the confounded slip of paper.

I am right in front of it. "NOBODY WANTED." Another chance gone . . . and maybe another chance missed somewhere else, by waiting. We disperse without talking; we have nothing to say to each other until we meet again in front of another building or this same one.

III

It is 9 o'clock now, just time for the Avenue. The disappointments of the early morning—well, we

have to take them, but the day is not lost yet. We have Sixth Avenue to look forward to. All those agencies there—all those jobs—we should be able to land one of them. We have still enough money to pay the fee.

There is Elizabeth, waiting.

"No luck with the perfumery?"

"Only experienced were hired."

Well, that's that. Where shall we go first? All these agencies. . . . "I'm going to Mac's. He's decent. I'm going to wait there until something comes in."

"Okay, Elizabeth. I'm going up and down the Avenue. Meet you later at Mac's."

I start my way "up and down". I enter dark entrances, climb steep stairs, one after the other. Everywhere the same picture. Bare, dirty walls, rows of chairs, desks. Men and women crowding the rooms, hallways, and stairs.

"Have you a waitress job?" I ask the man or the woman behind the desk.

"Nothing today"—or "Only for a young girl." Everywhere the same answer. "Sit down and wait."

I do not want to wait. I keep on going—I keep on climbing these steep stairs—I keep on asking.

At last Jack has something. I am not too old for the job.

"It's good. Good tips. Take it."

"Steady?"

"Sure, steady."

I begin to figure: six days a week—a dollar a day—that makes \$24 for a month—that means \$2.40 for fee—if not more. It is a lot of money if one considers. . . .

"Haven't you an extra for today?"

An extra does not cost such a large fee—and sometimes it turns into a steady. There is no risk of losing \$3.

"I haven't." Jack's voice is very cool now and he turns to another girl.

"I'll take it."

Jack turns back to me and becomes friendly again. He writes out the address of the place where I am supposed to go and hands me a receipt for a \$3 fee.

Three dollars? Well—let it go at that. I am glad I have job. I can't be bothered now about this fee business. Ten per cent—heck—ten per cent or fifteen per cent—as long as I have a job. It's not fair—no—but I have no time now, I have to be on my way to work.

It's a swell place, this restaurant. I can't go in right away. I am a bit rushed and nervous, and during the subway ride I had no time to figure out the answers to all those

questions about experience and references which will surely pop up. I must take a walk around the block and find a mirror where I can powder my face and fix up my hair. I'm a sight! Well, up since 4 o'clock — and these overshoes! But the slush in the street makes it necessary to wear overshoes. After all — what does it matter? I am here to work, I am a good worker, I've had experience. Does it matter that I do not look like a "Follies Girl"?

"Mr. Jack sent me. You need a waitress."

The man at the cash register looks me over from head to foot.

"I don't know Mr. Jack and I am sure I don't need a waitress. Besides, I get my help from another agency. Sorry," he adds after a look at my face. He signs my slip with "no" and a minute later I am on the street again. Another nickel for carfare — the fourth this morning.

Jack is not surprised to see me back.

"It's a mistake. Sit down and wait. Something else may turn up."

I don't want to wait. I want my \$3 back.

Jack laughs. "Don't be so impatient. Wait. I give you something else tomorrow."

Tomorrow? Oh, no, I want my money today.

Jack becomes almost paternal. "Look here," he pats my shoulder, "your money is not lost. I promise, I give you something tomorrow."

He is so kind, so benevolent. Can I be rude and insist on having my money? Can I take up this pencil with the sharp point and stab his unshaved face? Can I yell right into his face, "You liar!"

"All right, I'll be back tomorrow."

Jack does not even say goodbye.

IV

It is after 11 o'clock now. Maybe I would have done better to follow Elizabeth and wait in Mac's. Mac wouldn't play such a dirty trick and send me to a place where nobody is wanted. Maybe Elizabeth was lucky. . . .

She was not. She is still sitting in Mac's office, waiting. And with her are Caroline and Florence. The relation of my experience with Jack starts a lively conversation about agents and Sixth Avenue. Yes, if we only had the money we paid for fees — if we had it right now in our pockets — not to speak about the insults — too old — too ugly — we have to take into the bargain.

The time flies and it seems useless to wait any longer in Mac's.

Let's take a walk down the Avenue again.

Look, there is Edna! Edna always leads a gang. Where is she heading for now with her gang?

"We're going to the Town Hall. There's a banquet on tonight. Come along, maybe they need us."

We four and Edna's gang make a troop of ten. Edna does not mind how many follow her. She leads us through kitchen and pantry straight into the dining room of the Town Hall. She is familiar here, she knows her way around and how to find the headwaitress.

"Hello there!" she yells.

A lady appears. When she recognizes Edna she smiles. Yes, there is a banquet on. But no, she is sorry, she does not need any more help. Or — let's see — perhaps one — or two. The lady sizes up the troop; her eyes travel from one face to another. "So many," she thinks. "I can have my pick."

That's what she thinks, but Edna settles this for her. The lady needs two — naturally Edna is one and Edna's chum second. That's that.

"Goodbye, girls."

Out on the street again we feel tempted to call it a day and go home. After all, we have been hunting since 5 in the morning and now it is 1 o'clock. We are hungry too. Let's eat first. A sand-

wich and a cup of coffee puts new energy into us and we decide to try once more. Maybe we can get a dinner job.

"I *have* to have one," says Caroline. "Look at my shoes. But every cent I make goes for the rent."

Caroline's shoes are in a condition which makes them just as important as the rent. And ours? Well, if it is not shoes, it is something else. We all have to have a job soon — right away. And if there is nothing on the Avenue — better pore over the newspaper again; make sure we did not miss anything. Here, look! A doctor wants an assistant. "No experience necessary." Elizabeth and the rest are not interested. "No prospect from the start." But why not? No experience required.

"I'll try it. It's a chance."

Caroline would like to try too — but her shoes.

Trotting up and down the Avenue again in pursuit of a dinner job, I have hallucinations, visions. I see myself in a white uniform, in a big white room, handling instruments. I hear myself called "Miss". I live in a different atmosphere, where people move quietly and speak politely in a low voice. I wonder if my old white uniform that I wore as children's nurse is still good enough — or must I buy

a new one? I could wash and iron that old one tonight. Or maybe Elizabeth will lend me one of hers.

"Of course I will. But don't be so set on this job; it looks too hopeless. Take anything Mac offers."

"But if Mac hasn't got anything?"

Well, Mac has something.

"Extra dinner job, for one."

We are four.

"I'll take it." Caroline beats us to it. After all — her shoes are in a deplorable condition. All right, let her have it. Anyway, I have somewhere else to go. Who knows — I might be lucky — and then — I need not see the Avenue anymore. I need not walk for hours and hours through slush and snow, hunting, begging, fighting for a job. I need not put up with insults from agents that have my money. What a blessing to get away from this Avenue. . . .

But what about references? The doctor will ask for references. Well, why not tell the truth? You see, doctor, I have no recommendation, no pull. In order to make an honest living I have to take whatever I can get. I have worked as chambermaid, as waitress, as salesgirl. I have worked in factories — and, yes, I have been a governess and a nurse too. Would that not be the best thing to do, just tell the truth?

He would understand and recognize ability and honesty. Tell the truth, yes — don't be afraid. Here is the house. Enter right away? No. Oh God, these references! Chambermaid, waitress — it won't do, it will never work out. I have had experience with this kind of position. Must I lie?

Three times I have passed the doorman, and he is watching me. I better go home. No use trying with these references. The doorman knows what I am here for. The newspaper under my arm tells him. I am embarrassed. But anyway, he must have seen many girls with newspapers enter this house during the last hour. There is another one coming. No — I am not giving up without trying. Like a streak of lightning I dash into the house, through the vestibule, and ring the bell at the door with the doctor's name. Now I can't back out.

The door is immediately opened by a woman in a white uniform.

Lord, what a mob. I did not expect that. The narrow hallway is jammed with girls. Why didn't I go home? This is hopeless.

"Everyone sit down here." White uniform opens the door to the waiting room. "Don't push. The doctor will interview each one."

Well then, there is a chance. Now that we are assured of that we stop pushing and without any sign of hostility we take seats and relax. Since we all have a chance we might just as well be friendly to each other. The light is bright, the room warm and comfortable, we almost feel at ease. We glance through the magazines which are scattered around; we converse. There is an atmosphere of solidarity in the room. But somehow, the topic of our conversation does not fit into this picture of ease. No matter, whether factory, Sixth Avenue, or waiting room—it is the same: “Job hunting”.

All of us who are sitting here, during the early morning and all through the day, have been sitting in another waiting room already or have been standing in front of a factory, or have been climbing stairs on Sixth Avenue. And all of us, except one, the one the doctor will hire today, will be chasing after the chance tomorrow.

The white door in the middle of the room opens and the doctor appears. His eyeglasses sparkle so that one cannot see his eyes. Are they friendly, humane?

“The first one, please.” His voice is low and polite.

The door closes behind the first one. The interview is not a long

one. Only a few minutes—and the door opens again. The first one does not look at us while she walks out of the room.

The door closes behind the second—and opens after a few minutes.

“The third one, please.”

Now, what’s this? The third one has been in there five minutes . . . ten minutes. We in the waiting room are silent; we listen to the soft murmur from the doctor’s room. We throw significant glances at each other. Fifteen minutes!

“She’s got the job,” a voice says. Shall we go home?

In the doctor’s room the murmur ceases, a door opens, footsteps in the hallway, and “goodbye” from the doctor.

“She’s got the job.” This lucky third one did not come back through the waiting room. Let’s go home, it’s all over. But no, there is the doctor again.

“The next one, please.”

He will see everyone; we may still have a chance. One after the other goes through the door, one after the other comes back and leaves the room without looking at us. We cannot read their faces. Are they glad? Are they disappointed?

“The next one, please.”

My turn. Oh Lord, my shoes! I meant to wipe them off. Now it is too late, the door closes behind me.

"Have a seat." The doctor indicates a club chair at the other side of his desk.

Only the desk between us — yet I cannot see your eyes, doctor, your eyeglasses sparkle so much. No, it is the same thing with all the desks in every office — this side, my side of your desk, doctor, is in a different world. Chambermaid, waitress. . . .

"What is or was your occupation?"

"Companion to Mrs. So and So."

Mrs. So and So will give me a reference, she knows, she is intelligent. Sorry, doctor, but you don't know, you don't understand. Chambermaid, waitress. . . . I cannot see your eyes, if they are humane.

"How long were you there? What else have you done?"

"I stayed with Mrs. So and So one year. From then to now I made my living by giving lessons in German and teaching piano."

I need not tell him that I have only one pupil for German, that I teach piano to my janitor's little girl just for the fun of it. The club chair is comfortable, even though it stands on "this" side of the desk; the room breathes intellect, secur-

ity. . . . I would like to stay here, work here.

"I had a little experience as assistant in Europe, doctor." I do want to stay here.

"That's good. And what were your duties?"

My brain starts working, chasing memories. What did those assistants I saw in the offices do?

"Well, I made appointments with patients, I cleaned instruments. . . . (Oh Lord, what did they do?) I answered the telephone. . . . I kept the office and waiting room in order. . . . I assisted. . . ."

"I see. You seem to be intelligent. Give me your address. I'll let you know." The doctor rises from his chair. Is that all? Let me know. . . . It is all; the interview is over.

"You can leave through this door."

I do not go back through the waiting room. Those sitting in there will hear my footsteps in the hallway and will think:

"She's got the job."

I know I need not bother about a white uniform tonight or tomorrow or the day after tomorrow — but I can't decide now whether to go home and sleep or go on through the night in order not to miss a single chance.

GOV. EARLE OF PENNSYLVANIA

By EUGENE PHARO

BACK in the days when Horace Greeley acted as public advisor on matters of national import, young men with a flair for adventure were told to Go West. Many of them did so — and around the close of the century returned Eastward with enough raw gold in their pockets to send their sons to college. But the result of such higher education upon the post-pioneer generation was not, as might have been expected, an improvement in America's cultural status; on the contrary, there was graduated an ebullient army of virile young bloods, whose lives and pocket money were dedicated to horse racing, polo, yachting, big-game hunting, blondes, and kindred pursuits; and who helped mightily to enliven the activities of other scions of wealth, whose daddies had managed by pure brain work, and without stirring from the East, to siphon their share of riches from the frontier. This traditional state of affairs continued with minor interruptions until the Fall of 1929, when the stock market

dropped from under the nation's blue-blooded sporting element, and brought home to heirs of all ages the knowledge that, if polo and yachting were not actually under ban, at least they were temporarily passé in a land gripped by social and economic convulsions.

By the time the early 'Thirties rolled around, it had become clear that the gilded life was more or less a thing of the past, and that the entrenched power of Wall Street was giving way to the voting power of the American masses. It was at this juncture that the more obtuse young sportsmen commenced buying villas in foreign lands; but a few of them, shrewder than the rest and pondering the political handwriting on the wall, saw a Vision. The militant forces of Labor were coming over the mountain, somewhat disorganized and leaderless, yet nevertheless with a clear-cut goal in view. Did they not require a certain leavening of aristocratic money, brains, and talent in the high offices of command? Was it not the duty of forward-looking

young capitalists to supply this deficiency, and thereby rest a guiding hand upon the march of events? The philosophy appeared sound: Labor, amazed at such unprecedented camaraderie, was receptive. And thus was created, in the minds of certain astute but thrill-hungry gentlemen of fortune, that greatest of modern American sports — riding herd on the proletariat.

In this connection, the career of Governor George Howard Earle, III, of Pennsylvania holds more than idle interest for the historian of our times. If, in the Spring of 1932, George Howard had not passed the age of forty, it is doubtful whether political obscurity would have bothered him. But the thrill and zip of polo, and of maneuvering the large fortune that his father had left him in 1928, had, in the face of the Depression's cold realities, begun to pall. He was still young, yet the future did not seem to hold much promise for a man who had gained his stature on the playing fields of Long Island and Narragansett; he was definitely at loose ends. So perhaps it was providential that one afternoon in New York City, he ran across his friend, William C. Bullitt, another Pennsylvania blue-blood and budding statesman, who took time off to depict the excitements and thrills

of political life, particularly for a man who had plenty of cash and therefore would not have to start at the bottom. The up-and-coming Democratic Party, continued weather-wise Mr. Bullitt, seemed to offer the most adventure. Accordingly, Mr. Earle, ever a man of action, so arranged things by Fall that a large portion of his private funds was put at the disposal of that lusty Party, and he publicly severed his ties with the Republican organization with which the Earles had been identified ever since his great-grandfather presided over the first National Republican Convention in Philadelphia in 1856. "Today," George Howard thought it necessary to explain in a letter to the *Philadelphia Record* of October 9, 1932, "the lack of policies of Mr. Hoover has driven millions of Republicans like myself into the Democratic ranks, determined to do all that we can to elect a man so thoroughly capable of accurate decision as Mr. Roosevelt".

This was the opening public move in the life of a remarkable Uplift careerist. Since that time Mr. Earle's money and interest have bought him more thrills and prestige than ever he was able to obtain from polo ponies, yachts, airplanes, or in the pursuit of

ducks, deer, and Austrian bustard, or in breeding dogs, with all of which his name had been chiefly, if unobtrusively, identified before 1933. Indeed, one sees him in his later manifestations as a man who once found intense pleasure in riding hell-bent at the *papier mâché* posts of the polo field, but who now satisfies the same urge in a vastly larger way by dashing hither and yon, by airplane, ship, motor car, and if necessary by horse, to ride herd on the Oppressed everywhere, gradually evolving into a sort of political Genghis Khan, with an illimitable proletarian following and a prestige reaching to the heavens. He has carried the game much further than Mr. Bullitt, who has been content with the embassies at Moscow and Paris; and further than another of his wealthy and socially prominent Philadelphia friends, Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., who, in return for some of his large fortune, is occupying the embassy at Warsaw. For the sporting proclivities of Mr. Earle resulted in his putting on so good a show when he was sent abroad as Minister to Vienna in 1933, that he was offered by Lord Joseph Guffey, Democratic *Führer* of Pennsylvania, larger opportunities to contribute cash to the Party and to ob-

tain political preferment at home. Since then, this burly sportsman and lover of the good things of life has converted himself into a prophet of the multitude through devices familiar to all men of means who, having seen no need in their youth to acquire knowledge or skill along any important line, nevertheless seek the distinctions they bring. For having plenty of money in the first instance, and plenty of political spoils to deal around in the second, Mr. Earle has been able to compensate advisors, consultants, ghost-writers, ghost-thinkers, and guides, whose talents, added to his own, are necessary to his political ambition.

So that for the present, this sleepy-looking man, with the high-pitched, vaguely agreeable voice that you hear endlessly at any Devon horse show, is a fetish of the mob; just as socially he is anathema to many of those who continue faithful to the social punctilio to which they—and he—were born. And owing to a steadily improving histrionic talent and an unscrupulous willingness to purvey verbal melodrama, he has become known further as Crown Prince of the New Deal and Heir Apparent of the Roosevelt Administration. For with all his other values he has mingled that of being

the nation's No. 1 Carbon Copy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, to whom, he says, "there are no men in the Democratic Party or any other party who reach knee-high in stature, mentally and morally".

II

That Mr. Earle has come to attempt to outshadow Caesar is the more remarkable in view of the brevity and simplicity of his history before he dipped into his coffers to aid the New Deal and thereby found new thrills in life. So slim was Earle's biography that political apologists, during the Guffey-Earle campaign for the Senate and Governorship in 1934, were forced to dwell at some length on the achievements of his forebears, in order to fill the columns of space that yawned for persuasive propaganda in the New Deal press. For it was slight recommendation for political leadership that George Howard of Haverford had been a member of the Princemere and the championship Penllyn polo teams, or that he had served on the handicap committee of the U. S. Polo Association. His World War record was not exactly startling; and he had not even established a reputation as a banker or corporation executive, for his positions in this

field had been inherited from his father, who was a financial genius. And the only evidence that could be adduced of an Earle passion for the underdog, to which the Governor has so often given voice since, was that his father had rescued many stockholding widows and orphans from poverty by his services as a "doctor of sick corporations".

As a boy (he was born December 5, 1890, in Devon, Pennsylvania) George Howard Earle, III, attended the exclusive DeLancey School in Philadelphia, and in 1909 entered Harvard, although he did not stay long enough to obtain a degree. In 1911 he left to spend a couple of years in European travel — retreating, with the start of the World War, to Chicago, where he obtained some experience as business manager of a financial publication, and occupied part of his leisure in helping to operate the breadlines financed by his employer, later Vice-President, Charles G. Dawes. Some have thought that the spectacle he encountered then, of hungry men suing their wealthy brothers for coffee and sandwiches, provided the interest in the Oppressed that Governor Earle has harped upon so persistently since; but whether that is so, or whether his pro-

letarian ardor, with a canny eye to mob support, is modeled on that of his *Führer* in the White House, provides material for only a one-sided debate—the White House being so glaringly the more influential. In any event, it was not until President Wilson decided in 1916 to start a game of hide-and-seek with Villa that the essential spirit of this heir to the Earle sugar millions was given its first outlet.

Although George Howard's enlistment in the Pennsylvania National Guard as a buck private, and his experiences on the Mexican border, resulted in no heroic achievements, it gave the first evidence of his ability to rise, for he emerged from that romantic adventure a second lieutenant. And in the following year, with the entry of the United States into the World War, this fact, combined with the gift of his yacht to the government for use as a submarine-chaser, resulted in his entering the Navy as a lieutenant, junior grade, a move identical with that of several other wealthy young Philadelphians. This action, however, produced one episode of an heroic flavor, for on a blustery night in February, 1918, off Cape May, New Jersey, fire broke out on the sub-chaser *Victor*, of which Earle was in command. The boat carried

enough high explosive to blast the whole crew' into eternity. But Lieutenant Earle remained cool, and besides directing the fight against the flames, energetically took part in it. As a result, President Wilson presented him with the Navy Cross, this being the first definite honor bestowed on the congenital Republican by a Democratic commander-in-chief.

When Lieutenant Earle came home from such excitement, it is not surprising that, with no necessity to slave for his living, he proved unwilling to devote all his time to the sugar business or to bank directorships; although in view of his eventual responsibilities he spent some time at them. But, his physical bulk not being of its present 230-pound expansiveness, he was physically able to sustain activities that are now unthinkable; and that he did is evidenced by the fact that within the next ten years he was knocked unconscious on the polo field at least fifteen times. Yet in neither of these directions was there anything to indicate that he was even faintly interested in politics, or in gaining political preferment. Nevertheless, he had written no books nor put himself on record in any way; so that when he did turn to statesmanship, he had an almost open field,

with no barriers up except his own lack of proved aptitude. Thus we see an heir of the fortune that had been wrung from banking, railroads, sugar, and public utilities, approaching the predestined moment when he is to become, according to a pre-determined political pattern, a loud vocal champion of the "Peepul" against the "economic feudalism" of the proprietors of banks, railroads, sugar companies, and public utilities.

III

The general outline of how Mr. Earle was transmuted from a wealthy sportsman-about-town to a minor political prophet has been indicated; and some of the more sordid details of the Pennsylvania Democratic machine that brought it about can be consulted in the description of the career of Lord Guffey of Pittsburgh, that appeared in *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* for November, 1936, by the hand of Ray Sprigle, the same writer who recently revealed the nightshirt in Justice Hugo Black's closet. In this saga, Mr. Sprigle was occupied almost wholly with Joe Guffey, but he put Mr. Earle in his proper role, in passing, as "the Guffey-picked Democratic governor of Pennsylvania, and the donor of a pleasing

\$176,000 to his own and the junior Senator's 1934 campaign fund". This tie-up between the potent Mr. Guffey and the career of Mr. Earle has been made more obvious lately by the revelation of Senator Guffey's ideal of loyalty to President Roosevelt in the speech and interviews he emitted upon the adjournment of Congress last year. Such slavish adherence to every whim of the *Führer* has marked Governor Earle to an extreme that makes it seem not only his, but the policy of the whole Keystone State machine. For example, Senator Guffey's outburst, except for its inclusion of personalities and incidents, went not a whit beyond the spirit of a talk Governor Earle made to 1500 Pennsylvania Democrats at a Victory Dinner in Washington on December 3, 1936. At that time he scolded: "I want to remind all legislators here tonight of one important fact; that they were elected because they stood for the principles of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and for no other reasons. . . . They rode into office on the coat-tails of the President. Don't forget that." And the relation between this conviction and his patent belief that only a strict carbon copy of the *Führer* can ever succeed the *Führer*, is further proved by the Governor's disingenuous and un-

expected assertion on June 23 of last year that President Roosevelt should be elected for a third term—a proposal that the hot sunlight of premature publicity might well be expected to wither.

The Ministry to Austria that was awarded Earle in compensation for his contribution to President Roosevelt's first campaign, might have cancelled the obligations of the Administration to him, as such appointments did for Messrs. Bullitt and Biddle, if the vision of the Sugar Heir had not extended so much further, or if the excitements of the post had been more considerable. But the only excitement Mr. Earle managed to kick up proved to be somewhat of a dud, although helping to make him known in Pennsylvania as a devil of a fellow and revealing latent possibilities that the experienced Lord Guffey was quick to note. The excitement abroad, like many of Earle's achievements, was largely verbal, and consisted of an interview that he accorded to Austrian reporters in which he denounced anti-Semitism as un-American, and as militating against friendship for Austria from the United States. The Austrian press found it advisable not to print this slap at the Nazis, although news of it got around,

and it was cabled to the United States by the Associated Press. The chief effects were to prompt a Nazi sympathizer to take a pot shot at Earle, which missed, and to inspire the Philadelphia *Record* to exclaim, "he sets an example that fuddyduddy Ambassadors and cookie-pushing State Department undersecretaries should imitate". The outburst at Vienna, and the *Record's* discovery of Earle's courage, preceded by a few weeks a meeting of the Democratic State Committee in February, 1933, to confer over the approaching campaign for the governorship. And a visit to the United States by Minister Earle coincided exactly with the meeting of that committee. For by then, Lord Guffey and his associates had been struck by the comparative obscurity of Earle, which made him a political *tabula rasa* (and how politicians like their *tabulae rasae!*); by his willingness to play Follow-the-Führer; his fat money bags; and his general hellishness. All these things seemed made to order for the bill they had to fill: nor were they surprised when Prince George, asked if he would consent to run for the governorship as the gold-plated, triple-certified candidate of the Machine, made effective answer by resigning as Minister to Austria,

and reaching into his pocket for What It Takes.

From then on the story of the Keystone Governor begins to take on epic outlines; and if he continues to be essentially only a polo player and a wealthy sport, who is riding the mob instead of high-bred ponies, it is unlikely that the fact will be advertised or admitted. For he has become too closely identified with too many persons, all of them also riding hard for prestige and spoils. And they number, besides Lord Guffey and the tightly-fashioned machine that he has built to serve his own interests, every kind of person, including a horde of WPA and Relief hangers-on; social service pontiffs attached to a growing congeries of State bureaus, commissions, and offices (all very much on the Washington model); newspapermen who, under the Earle patronage, have been graduated from being typewriter-pounders to wearers of the judicial ermine, public utilities commissioners, or State-paid press agents for the Administration; newspaper proprietors; real-estate magnates; converted Republican officeholders; and Utopian prophets of half a dozen breeds, financial, social, and political. And the Governor has become quite precious also to the labor unions, although

in this respect there are other members of his Administration in even closer training for future events, notably his Lieutenant Governor, Thomas Kennedy, who is secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers, bulwark of the CIO.

As an example of one powerful interest, there is the same Philadelphia *Record* in which Governor Earle forehandedly bought stock in 1933, and that is so tied up with the State and national fortunes of the New Deal that it would be very embarrassing for its proprietor, Dave Stern, to have to find another cause for his organs, which include the New York *Evening Post*, and two papers in Camden, New Jersey. The Philadelphia paper is virtually a court circular for Earle, and its writers and correspondents are keyed to their adulatory chronicling of his career by the spectacle of what has happened to some of their confreres. For example, the financial editor of the *Record*, Luther A. Harr, after Earle's election, was made State Secretary of Banking and is being touted for further political emoluments; and its political editor, Harry A. Kalodner, who did zealous service for Earle during his campaign, was made, by appointment of the Governor, Judge of Common Pleas Court No. 2 in Philadelphia. And a num-

ber of the most skilled word-slingers of the Pennsylvania press are serving in other offices at Harrisburg, so that if the public pronouncements of the Governor are varied in style, they are always eloquently and effectively written.

The only direction, indeed, in which it is conceivable that anything less than creditable to the Crown Prince is apt to emanate at present, so far as his political cohorts are concerned, is from the Labor camp. For instance, John L. Lewis, with whom Earle has been in almost as friendly contact until lately as with Lord Guffey or Prime Minister Jim Farley, some months ago put the finger on Lieutenant Governor Kennedy as the next Governor, whereas the machine is openly discussing every possibility except that one. And Governor Earle's handling of the hot trade-union crisis in Johnstown last June laid him open to so many suspicions that Labor, which in his campaign for office turned in a majority for him only about half as great as that for Kennedy, may in the end have him on the pan. This in spite of the fact that Earle has made unalterably his the following statement of faith, which would seem to cover anything:

What the man in the Governor's chair needs most of all is a heart. If

the Governor has a heart and all that the word implies, he will be able to cope with the many problems that rise, in a manner that will accomplish the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

This creed, which he enunciated in his campaign for the governorship, he has exemplified in many ways, from jumping into the Susquehanna River to rescue a pet poodle to visiting the families of bootleg coal-miners in order to sympathize with them over their poverty. Yet when it came to the Steel strike in Johnstown, his heart led him to occupy so many different positions and all in the space of a few days that his Labor friends began to scratch their ears.

It will be recalled that on June 19, the Governor, excited by threats of mass-murder fomented by unsuccessful strikers, closed the Cambria plant of the Bethlehem Corporation by imposing a species of martial law. The immediate protest of the corporation, and of all Americans who resented the display of State power to settle a private industrial dispute, was drowned out for a few days by the chorus of flattery that reached the Governor's ears from the partisans whom he had favored. Yet on June 24, it became apparent to him that Dr. Roosevelt had not taken nearly so radical a position, in spite

of the commitments made during the Presidential campaign. So on that date, Prince George sheepishly permitted the Steel Barons to have back control of their property. Moreover, on July 4, he flew to Johnstown through a rain storm to appear before a mass meeting of workers in an anxious attempt to preserve their confidence in him and the President, and to moderate the revolutionary zeal in which a few days before he had given them aid and comfort. He even went so far as to give the unions some good advice, although in doing so he put up a defensive elbow, as follows: "I don't think I have to tell you that I am your friend. . . . I have just signed the 44-hour week bill, have ended the coal and iron police . . . have given you one of the things I promised in 1934—occupational disease insurance. And since I am your friend and you are my friends, I am saying some things you will like and some things you will dislike."

Among the things he assumed the Steel workers would not like was a prescription that they avoid violence, stamp out of their ranks "those God-damned Communists", and be willing to keep their agreements with their overlords; a stand at that time being expressed in Washington and in other key New

Deal States with remarkable unanimity, under the obvious lead of Dr. Roosevelt with his classic "plague on both your houses".

IV

In various conversations with inquiring journalists, Governor Earle has defined himself as a Liberal, and he has stated that the course that he and President Roosevelt are following is the only one that will safeguard the capitalist system—of which, since they both benefit largely from it, it has been assumed that neither is consciously an enemy. That their course consists largely of giving Labor its own way, through State assistance, and of doing constant lip-service to the "underprivileged" in order to convince all potential revolutionists of their proletarian ardor, is sufficiently obvious. But in Pennsylvania it has resulted so far in no serious upset to the normal state of affairs, and politically the system of patronage and spoils, and of favoritism to special interests of one sort or another, can be considered just as corrupt—if not more so—than any ever operated by the Camerons, Quay, or Penrose.

Under Earle's Administration there has been social legislation sim-

ilar to that enacted at Washington, and taxes have been imposed on corporations, notably chain stores, in a big way. Political enemies have been liquidated. Laws have been drawn up illegalizing private employment of deputy sheriffs, and laws have been talked about (but not passed) for wiping out company towns and settling the boot-leg-coal question. But no coal mine has been taken over by the State; no State enterprise has been established to take away the profits from private business; and no unconstitutional device for making new jobs for Democrats (several have been introduced) has as yet gotten by the State Supreme Court. On the other hand, a great quantity of WPA funds has been switched into Pennsylvania, so that with 7.6 per cent of the country's population, more than ten per cent of those on WPA rolls are found within its borders; and there have been created a great number of centrally-controlled State agencies that take care of the politically faithful. In all other respects the conduct of affairs has proceeded along well-recognized political lines, calculated to build up party strength, at the same time that party spokesmen, out-yelled always by the ineffable Crown Prince, glorify the Great Un-

washed, and denigrate such citizens as make an income — except from State sources — of more than \$3000 a year.

So that unless one is inclined to believe that some other method than well-financed, well-organized, and well-entrenched gang politics, in a powerful industrial principality, controlling thirty-six electoral votes, and in high favor with the national Administration, will dictate the successor to Dr. Roosevelt in 1940 — in case he has a successor — he is forced to conclude that, regardless of Prince George's personal character or lack of it, he has a good chance of consummating his courtship of the New Deal, if not within the walls of the White House then upon its doorstep. For it was, after all, from Pennsylvania that word came in 1920, to the occupants of a smoke-filled room in a Chicago hotel, to throw the Presidency to Warren Harding. That it was a Republican machine which Penrose dominated then, and that it is a Democratic one that Lord Guffey dominates now, is a distinction without a difference; except that the existing organism commands enlarged opportunities for political exploitation and luxuriant spoils that would have made the Camerons, or Quay, or Penrose, faint with astonished envy.

DEATH IN HALIFAX

By EDMUND GILLIGAN

ON THE morning of December 6, 1917, life in the seaport of Halifax, Nova Scotia, went on serenely for seventeen minutes after a flicker of blue flame first appeared aboard the French munitions ship *Mont Blanc*.

It was nine o'clock, and the city had begun its work. Employees took their places in offices, warehouse, and factories, all burdened with the rich business of war; trains moved in and out of railway stations; wagons and trucks lumbered in the streets; tardy children raced for school; church bells rang. In the Narrows, a six-mile channel between Halifax Harbor and Bedford Basin, freighters were being warped into piers or were steaming through the roadstead for the open sea. Cruisers and transports swung at anchor. Longshoremen toiled over cargoes of war materials.

The seventeen minutes commenced with the appearance in the harbor of a ship's life-boat, manned by French sailors. They were striking furiously at the calm waters of

the Narrows, rowing for the northern shore. The oarsmen gave no outcry, made no visible signs of terror, but as they rowed their eyes occasionally flung back in desperation to their ship, the *Mont Blanc*, standing off Pier Eight. They rowed away from her with all their strength; their officers, huddled in the sternsheets, urged them on. A second small-boat followed astern, also filled with men, all glancing backward from time to time at that thin blue flame.

The harbor boatmen, leisurely plying their trade, eyed the French sailors with mild interest. They also looked in the direction of the *Mont Blanc* and noted nothing remarkable. Aboard the freighter, all appeared quiet. The flame had vanished. Another ship, the *Imo*, was backing from the *Mont Blanc's* starboard side. Her horn bawled. Perhaps a touch of bow to bow, a frequent occurrence in these crowded waters.

The Frenchmen forced their craft into shallow water. When it struck the beach, they flung their

oars aside and leaped to shore, splashing through the water, flinging themselves forward in awkward eagerness. It was then that their mouths opened. Shouts of terror and streams of French curses and half-prayers came in a gabble. One of them cried out a French phrase over and over. Others, attempting the English for *powder*, shouted: "Pou-dar! Pou-dar!"

Frightened men and women ashore questioned the seamen. In answer, they pointed to the ship, where the blue flame had risen again. The Frenchmen clattered into the streets and fled without shouting, now giving all their strength to the task of getting even further from their ship.

At first it was thought they were drunk or crazy: crews of tramp vessels had committed strange acts in Halifax during three years of war. But as the sailors vanished, their warning ran garbled from mouth to mouth. Men repeated it to their wives and the women cried it to their neighbors. Some clerks ran into the streets, stared at the seamen, and then legged after them. Others hastened to the water's edge to question the men leaping from the second boat.

"The *Imo* struck her!" blurted a Canadian in the boat. "She's afire. The *Mont Blanc*. Munitions

aboard." He was William Mackie, a Halifax pilot, who had been aboard the French freighter.

Meanwhile, something else was going on near the munitions ship. *H.M.S. Highflyer*, a British cruiser, had put a boat over the side. Officers and men tumbled into it. The oars dropped, struck hard, and the boat shot toward the *Mont Blanc*. The townspeople at the water's edge watched the navy boat. Some of them cheered. Others turned and ran toward their homes.

The first few of those seventeen minutes thus passed. Not one was wasted; but nothing could be done.

The *Mont Blanc's* blue flame flourished, waned, sprang up again. Something exploded under the flame — perhaps a can of oil. The vessel shuddered and began to turn with the tide.

The *Highflyer's* boat closed the *Mont Blanc's* counter, swung smartly alongside. Watchers on shore saw officers and men clamber to the aft-deck and run forward toward the flame. The knot of men vanished in a cloud of black smoke.

It was now time. The seventeen minutes had passed.

A shaft of yellow light, no thicker than the *Mont Blanc's* masts, streaked upward from her

deck, piercing the sunny air for a mile. For an instant, it whirled like a waterspout. Then its top spread and the whole pillar of fire mushroomed into an enormous purple cloud.

The explosion came: 4000 tons of trinitrotulol — *TNT* — smashed ship, sea, sky, and land. It was the greatest single explosion ever to occur on this planet. Its roar was so vast that no one who heard it was ever able to think of anything comparable, or even to say what sort of sound it was. It was a noise that killed; a sound for God to make, not man.

The *Mont Blanc's* 3000-ton hull vanished in a hot upheaval. A fragment of her anchor, weighing half a ton, flew three miles amid sheets of flame and a turmoil of smoke. Plates ripped from the hull fell in a hissing rain over the Narrows, over ships and houses. An immense torrent, white and boiling, towered upward where the ship had been. Gulls high above the steaming maelstrom burst into gobs of flesh and feathers.

Death then advanced. It roared over the water, knocked vessels down, drove small craft under. One boatman went to the bottom in his skiff and came shooting up a quarter mile away. Sailors fell like shot birds from their riggings

and caught fire as they plunged. Ships leaped upward, tore free from their moorings, fell off crazily before the tidal wave. Eight sailors were spattered against a cruiser's turret. The captain of the *Imo* and thirty of his crew were squashed on her deck. Seamen whirled upward from every ship in the Narrows. A huge rock, ripped from the harbor bottom, hurtled through the air, struck a ship at a pier, and killed sixty-four workmen. Only those sailors below decks escaped the blow dealt by the great globe of gas, which now sped toward the land at a terrible speed. Inside that globe there lived an invisible flame, so hot that even steel could not withstand its touch.

II

Slopes rise on either side of the Nova Scotian Narrows at Halifax. On the southern shore the community of Richmond lies in a trough formed by the hills. Through this trough the immense pressure now swept. Two hundred children in the Richmond school had time only to half-rise from their desks before the walls fell upon them. Three lived. The worshippers in St. Joseph's Church, looking upward in supplication,

died that way. Streets of flimsy houses trembled and collapsed; trees leaped from the earth and went flying like leaves; mothers and their children were lifted high into the air, carried far, then dashed to death against walls and telegraph poles. A sailor, flung 1000 feet from the harbor, landed stripped of his clothes but still wearing his boots.

A cotton factory, crowded with girls and men bending over the looms, crumpled. Heavy machines fell through the floors, killing and mangling. Scores died and many more dragged themselves with broken limbs to the streets. The unseen flame set the cotton afire. Tenements near the factory toppled. The North Street railway station fell in a heap. Automobiles plunged against the walls; trolley cars ran through the flaming houses.

A thousand fires started. Wooden homes were ignited by overturned stoves or by the invisible flame roaring back and forth. A sugar refinery, an elevator, a military gymnasium, and a score of warehouses vanished in waves of choking smoke. The fires met, formed one great blaze, and consumed the ruins. The area from Pier Eight to the North Street bridge turned red with embers. A nauseating

odor spread: the odor of human and animal bodies burning. Out of this inferno, where cries for help now rose above the whirring of flames and the groans of the dying, there then came, running and stumbling, the blind and the maimed, the dogs and the cats, horses galloping in a frenzy.

The force of the *Mont Blanc's* explosion spent its fury on the harbor shores. But its after-blast rushed onward into the city itself and broke windows, toppled walls, wrecked presses and lighting systems, and spread showers of glass. The concrete and brick structures resisted, and, for the most part, survived. Everyone in those buildings rushed to the streets. They looked to the north and saw flames and smoke and heard the echoes of the dying. At first the cry went up that a German fleet was bombarding the city. This was followed by reports of an air raid, and many people swore they saw planes in the sky, sent up by U-boats. They feared other explosions. Panic seized them and they ran into the open country. Five thousand persons crowded onto Halifax Common.

Then came the invasion from Richmond and Dartmouth. Preceded by cries of torment, the victims of the blast stumbled and

crawled and groped toward the streets of the main city. Blood dripped from their faces. Some ran with stumps of wrists held before them. Children, lacerated and bloody, led blinded mothers and fathers through the debris. Scores fell and died. One woman appeared with a weeping child tugging at her hand. On her arm she carried the headless body of her baby.

The appearance of the wounded and the cessation of the explosions brought Halifax back to life. Courage rose and terror subsided. Rescue began. Couriers were sent over highways and railroads to tell the outside world what had happened. The world already knew, in a way. Old ladies at tea on Prince Edward Island, 125 miles away, had seen their saucers dance. Truro had felt the shock. Ships far at sea had heard the explosion. Hours later they learned the cause.

A pall of smoke and dust hung over the city, blanketing the sky, impeding rescue efforts. But the work got under way. Troops marched out of their barracks to make room for women and children. Five hundred tents went up on the Common. Wagons and horses and men were called in from the country. Firemen, aided by soldiers and volunteers, entered

the burning area and started the long task of extinguishing the fires. The first thing the firemen found was the body of their chief, crushed beneath a wrecked fire engine. The dead were laid on the pavements. Soon their bodies were piled like cordwood. Wagons came and carted them away.

Following the rescuers, stealing past the police lines, came men and women whose families had been trapped. They rushed to the places that had been their homes and discovered the bodies of women and children under roofs or burning in the rafters. A mile from Pier Eight, searchers found one of the French sailors who had fled from the *Mont Blanc*. He had run a step too far, or not quite far enough. He lay mortally wounded, struck by a bit of flying debris.

American marines appeared in the town, having landed from the U.S.S. *Old Colony*, anchored in the harbor. They joined British sailors and marines. Estimates of the number of dead grew hourly. At first it was 800 or 1000; then twenty-five wagons rolled out of the fire and smoke, piled with the half-naked bodies of girls from the factories, children from the schools, and sailors tossed up from the harbor on the tidal wave. The death list mounted to 2000. The injured

totaled 20,000. Five hundred persons were never found, having vanished from the face of the earth. Among them, it was said, were men and women who had seen things they did not wish to remember.

Night came over a city lighted only by torches and lanterns. Surgeons operated by the glimmer of oil lamps. Sailors, soldiers, and police patrolled the streets. All night the wagons of the dead rolled out of the smoke and stopped at schools and other buildings used for morgues. And then a new horror arrived. A storm blew down over the stricken city, the worst blizzard in its history. Icy winds benumbed the rescuers. Pneumonia set in among the injured and hastened the deaths of the maimed.

By this time the outside world had begun an extraordinary effort to assist. Special trains started from New York with medical supplies, food, and doctors. All the New England States sent similar contributions. A ship was loaded at Boston and the throng of contributors was so great that police reserves were called to keep order. The Canadian Government sent supplies and workers. But the rescuers came only in time to open vast burial plots.

III

Why did the blue-flame flicker across the deck of the *Mont Blanc*? This is the generally accepted version:

The *Mont Blanc*, having come up the coast from New York, lay outside the harbor during the night. She entered the Narrows in daylight. The *Imo*, a Norwegian ship, was proceeding down the Narrows, headed for Belgium with a load of grain. Captain Fron was on the *Imo's* bridge; Captain Lemedec on the *Mont Blanc's*.

There were other ships moving in the Narrows, the *Stella Maris* among them. Mackie, the pilot of the *Mont Blanc*, said the *Imo* blew two blasts as a signal to the *Stella Maris* that she was passing to starboard. The *Mont Blanc* signaled to the *Imo* that she was going to port. The signals caused confusion and the *Imo*, a thousand tons heavier than the *Mont Blanc*, swung over until the ships were steaming starboard to starboard. The mistake was seen too late for correction.

"I steer my ship so the bow hits first," explained Lemedec. He knew what was beneath his deck, a fact not revealed to his crew until the moment of collision. He hoped the *Imo* would hit his bow, and not the hold where the TNT lay.

The *Imo* struck the *Mont Blanc*. It was not a hard impact; enough, however, for the *Imo's* prow to cut through the *Mont Blanc* and overturn a drum of benzol up forward. Some persons maintained that the clash of steel threw out sparks; others insisted that the Frenchmen had a fire going in the fo'castle. But in any event, the fatal flame appeared. Lemedec and Mackie thought things over. Blazing benzol was running over the deck, seeping into the fo'castle and the hold. The captain ordered everyone over the side.

The *Imo* backed off and beached herself because her mate thought plates had been sprung. Officers of the *Highflyer*, alarmed by the signals, saw what had happened. Also they knew what was in the *Mont Blanc's* hold. Yet three officers and twenty seamen were in the boat that drew alongside, an example of bravery difficult to equal in naval history. No one ever knew how close they came to winning. They were dissolved in that globe of gas.

In the litigation that followed the disaster, the *Imo* was blamed by one court, the *Mont Blanc* by the next. The case was carried to the highest tribunal in the Empire, the Privy Council, which found both ships equally at fault. A few licensed men were suspended; a few officials lost their posts. Then the books were closed.

As for the *Imo*, she went to sea again with her grain. Later she changed her name, but not her luck. Four years after the Halifax explosion, on the anniversary of the very day when her bow struck the *Mont Blanc*, she ran onto a Falkland Islands' reef and sank. The news was an important item for the Halifax papers, read with much interest by those who could read, and listened to with greater interest by those who could not read, being blind. They cursed her again that day, especially her engines. Repairs to them had held her back an hour on that morning of December 6, 1917—an hour that might have taken her well out of the Narrows before the *Mont Blanc* entered.



CONFESSIONS OF A NEW DEALER

BY AN EX-JOBHOLDER

PRIOR to the Summer of 1934, the word "Democrat" was to me no more than a mild term of opprobrium. I knew that my father was a Democrat when occasion demanded, that he even had been elected to a minor office on the Democratic ticket; but as he remained the most upright and respected of citizens, I gathered that the offense was not serious. Indeed, I almost had forgotten it, as had he. But in 1934 I had occasion to recall it with joy.

I needed a job.

The matter of party affiliation, even though it is acquired by the mere accident of birth, has job-getting powers which no amount of ability or training can equal. This was fortunate in my case, for my worth to the world at that time was as negligible as that of most people fresh from college. Since Providence had been kind enough to provide me with the one qualification necessary for a Government job, however, I used it for all it was worth. Old friends of the family were hailed with joy, vague

connections with the incumbent Senior Senator were sought out and strengthened, and before long, I was corresponding with him. He could promise nothing definite of course — he would not have been Senator if he could have — but he expressed his overpowering willingness to do everything in his power to help me should I come to Washington.

Once in Washington, I immediately gave vent to my ignorance by offering to work. I even offered to work for nothing until such time as I should find paying employment. Naturally, this put me under suspicion, and I was regarded as a dangerous lunatic. I was informed by the good-humored secretary that my proposal was unheard of; that the customary procedure was to *demand* a job and to plead starvation, a large family, poor health, debt, or any of the other special qualifications which entitle one to work for the United States Government.

So they put me to work writing letters. The Senator was up for re-

election in less than two months and work was heavy. A short time previously, every farmer in the Senator's extensive bailiwick had been informed that the Senator would be only too happy to help him get his farm loan through, and please to advise of any difficulties. All other constituents had been sent a humble request for constructive criticism and guidance concerning public policy, especially with regard to the expenditure of Relief funds. The replies came in boxcar lots. Every farmer, naturally, had applied for a farm loan and was having difficulty with it; all the others felt that they were not getting their share of Relief. The letters were all alike, and for the first time I came to realize what a deprived lot of mendicants a large slice of the population had become.

Most of the letters were degenerate pleas for charity that would make a hardened Salvation Army captain blush, and all were deserving of the cavalier treatment they received. This treatment consisted of being referred to the department in question — usually Relief — where in the course of a century they would or would not receive attention. Then a copy of the letter of reference was sent to the constituent together with a "personal" letter, piously stating that the

Senator was "doing everything in his power," etc. These letters, of course, were sent in franked envelopes — for this was "official business". And every letter was a vote.

In leisure moments, while I was not pounding out votes, I scouted about for a job. My searchings led me into many strange places and introduced me to strange sights. There was, for example, the lady Director of Personnel at one emergency agency, who informed me that "these old dodos down here want girls for stenographers, and they want them young and good looking". There were the fake examinations given by some departments, though no one could discover why, inasmuch as those who failed were hired as frequently as those who passed. There were the bogus application blanks "to be placed on file for future reference". Unique among these was Mr. Ickes', which was highly moral in tone and bore the legend: "Political connections have no bearing upon appointments made in this department." But I soon learned that without "clearance papers" and letters of recommendation none need apply. These letters certified that one was above suspicion — politically, that is. For some reason, all of them were addressed, not to

the department or person concerned — but to the Hon. James A. Farley.

A short time previous to the congressional elections, most of the departments added considerably to their forces for obvious reasons, and in the shuffle I managed to squeeze into the AAA.

II

Twenty-five or more of us were crowded into two small offices in the old Post Office building. The work was simple; it consisted mainly of typing addresses on franks for the bundles of wheat-allotment checks which were then being passed out to farmers. A slow worker using the hunt-and-peck system could type two of these in a minute, and as there were seldom more than ten to be typed, and twenty-five of us to do it, it can be seen that our rest was virtually unbroken. Naturally, we did not protest; we were hired on a month-to-month basis and had no desire to work ourselves out of a good job.

Some slept. For these, cots were provided in the nurses' quarters, where they could go on a plea of sickness. Some played cards. A number of the men were attending law school, and these sometimes studied. Most of us, however,

passed the time just in talking, and as we represented almost every section of the country, considerable geography, fishing information, etc., was exchanged. When time hung too heavily we would shoot rubber bands, at which art most of us grew extremely proficient. There was scarcely one of us who could not break a light bulb at ten yards, free style.

One of our supervisors turned his idleness and intellect into profit by inventing "fool-proof" systems for beating the horses. These systems, which changed every day or so, were based upon vast research in the Congressional Library, plus a few unfortunate experiences of his own. He would discant upon these systems by the hour to our delight, for while he talked we did not have to work.

Six months of this heavy labor was enough for me — I am easily exhausted — and I soon needed a change. The swampy Potomac climate gave me asthma (the Senator's wife told me to consult her favorite chiropractor); the "beautiful" buildings — bastard Greek temples and Roman façades — gave me a headache. I accordingly applied for a job with the Federal Housing Administration in the homely surroundings of my home State. Ironically, I was given

a position as a stenographer, doubtless owing to the fact that I had previously taken the FHA examination for stenographers and failed.

The FHA was then in the boisterous process of organization, and for the next months I lived in an atmosphere not unlike that of a Billy Rose spectacle. One could not move without knocking down a dozen press agents, most of whom were newspapermen enjoying the first good salaries in their existences. News stories were concocted by the yard, and truth was no object. High-pressure publicity of all kinds was used: moving pictures, lurid posters, billboards, even automobile stickers. Relief clients were enlisted—and paid—to make a house-to-house canvass to spread the glad tidings. From Washington came tons of literature, most of it misleading.

The Time was at hand. Salvation was at last to be visited on the members of the Lower Income Bracket, even if Uncle Sam had to cram it down their throats. The ballyhoo of the FHA made the rowdiest medicine show in existence look like a High Church vesper service. It is doubtful if any stock swindler now rotting in jail for misuse of the mails ever foisted on the public a baser lot of misleading misinformation than did the FHA at this time.

Members of the Lower Income Bracket were informed that at last they could own their own homes. How? By buying them on monthly installments no greater than they were now paying in rent. How much could they borrow? Up to eighty per cent of the value of their homes. Interest rates? The lowest in history. Thus, Uncle Sam.

As was to be expected, all the "poor and indignant" (as one Townsend follower has called them) flocked to the office seeking Government loans. And they went away even more poor and more indignant when they discovered that (1) the FHA did not loan money, only banks as previously, and (2) that people of their class could not qualify for a Federal Housing loan anyway. For such was our thankless duty: to lead the suckers on, then rob them of all their illusions, which we had pumped into them with so much labor. That the banks had no intention of making loans under the FHA plan became quickly evident, especially the Western banks which were used to high interest rates. And that the FHA had even less intention of insuring such loans if made to persons in the Lower Income Bracket became even more patent.

Still the farce went on. More literature was distributed, more

idiotic and misleading news stories were concocted. A publicity expert was sent from Washington to organize Better Housing Headquarters in every city in the State having more than 100,000 population. Neither this imbecile nor the imbeciles who sent him discovered until his arrival that our largest city had to strain to hit even the 40,000 mark.

The ultimate result of this nonsense was considerable ill-feeling and little else. An occasional grudging loan was made to some wealthy client who insisted upon the low interest rate, and whose patronage the bank did not wish to lose. A few unsound loans were offered for insurance to secure "good will", but these were rejected promptly by the FHA. Indeed, the FHA became a butt for the banks who did not wish to say "no" to prospective borrowers — they let Uncle Sam say it for them.

I received my first experience with Government Statistics in this office. Inasmuch as two-thirds of the office force had been hired to publicize the program, it was deemed advisable at the end of the year to show some results. We therefore added up our prospective loans, multiplied, rationalized, and grabbed figures out of the air, and finally secured a very imposing set

of results. The only fault one could find with them was that they were false. But they were published, for, as someone very correctly observed: "Hell, they aren't half as bad as if they had come out of Washington".

To this day, the FHA has never affected the Lower Income Bracket — except to make it angry.

III

My next job was with the Works Progress Administration. (I was fired from the FHA at a salary of \$105 and almost immediately hired by the WPA at \$175 per month.) Ostensibly, my new function was to supervise a Better Housing Project. These projects, which were nation-wide, were directed toward a very high and noble purpose: "to increase and energize the flow of private capital". The theory underlying this was as simple as it was profound: we would discover and inform prospective borrowers; the good prospects would be weeded out and sent to a bank; the bank would make them a loan; the loan would build a house; the house would create a stir in the lumber industry; ditto brick, pipe, bathtub, and furnace industries; wheels would begin to turn; capital would flow; and the More Abundant Life

and the Millennium would be here.

But, unfortunately for the United States and the welfare of its citizens, one or two hitches marred the beauty of this scheme. In the first place, there were no more suckers aside from the usual array of poor and indignant. Likewise, the banks would make no loans under the FHA plan. Another hitch developed when it was discovered that these Herculean labors were to be achieved by real-estate "experts" who were to be culled from the Relief rolls, and there just weren't any. Obviously, the whole program was a farce, as anyone but the Brain Trustster who concocted it could see. Nevertheless, primary elections were approaching; there were two hotly-contested candidacies; and our program therefore became of eminent worth and value.

Four non-Relief "experts" were allowed us by dispensation of the Great Humanitarian. Two of these could distinguish a parcel of real estate from a drove of hogs. One had the very special qualification of being a close relative to the WPA Administrator, and the remaining "expert" was a former Democratic County Chairman. All of them were given tacit instructions as to which candidates they were to campaign for. Of course,

they were tossed a bundle of FHA literature to do with as they would. A few stenographers were taken from the Relief rolls (one of these actually could typewrite) to assist them, and they went happily about their business, increasing and energizing the flow of private capital wherever they went.

A more pompous, quarrelsome, miserable lot of misfits than my fellows at the WPA office would be difficult to find. It is safe to say that the entire lot, myself included, would have been on the other side of the desks begging for Relief had it not been for fortunate political connections. Failures from every walk of life filled these administrative offices, taking pompous pride in their authority over the other failures who had no political pull, and whose fortunes they had in charge. The seriousness with which this work was approached, the holier-than-thou attitude which was adopted by the staff toward the Relief clients, who were in all respects their equals and in many respects their betters, is attributable only to lack of intelligence and proportion, and is one of the major tragedies of the New Deal.

And that it was political from beginning to end and from top to bottom, no one but Messrs. Williams, Hopkins, and other assorted

charlatans have ever denied. I have shown how one project was merely a machine to buy votes, and this project differed not at all from the others. It is worthy of note that the Great Humanitarian himself authorized a fifteen per cent wage increase for all WPA workers *less than a month* before the 1936 elections. This increase was accompanied, of course, with the usual recital of high-minded motives, and one may safely assume that it was punctuated with winks at the Hon. Mr. Farley.

The WPA was packed with political incompetents from top to bottom, and remains so to this day. No qualifications whatever were required for administrative positions. Thus, my training as a student of music placed me in charge of a Housing Project. The NYA Director was an ex-brakeman. The lady Director of Education and Recreation was a preposterous harriidan wholly without education, a fondness for raw whisky being her sole idea of recreation. The others were of a type.

As is customary with the young and simple-minded, I at first took the project seriously. I even had the innocence to be outraged when I discovered that the project was a mere political set-up for the purchase of votes. A sizeable bi-

monthly check, however, served to emasculate my better self, and on the theory that although I could do no good, I would do no harm, I retired to my rooms, and spent my time reading and parading the night clubs. At first I appeared at the office twice a month to collect my check, but I finally gave this up as too strenuous and had my secretary bring it to my hotel.

The job lasted almost nine months. During that time I collected slightly less than \$2000—more money than I could earn in twice the time in private industry. The only work I did was at the Democratic Campaign Headquarters in the Autumn, where I frequently helped as a stenographer. Occasionally I had pangs of conscience and made feeble gestures toward resignation, but they never passed the preliminary stages. Several thousand men with families would have worked for the money I made. They needed the job far worse than I . . . but I was a good Democrat, wasn't I? So what the hell?

IV

Needless to state, the elections were highly successful and our candidates were placed in office.

Immediately after the WPA pro-

ject came to an end, I was sent by the newly-elected Governor to act as secretary to the Administrator of the State Grazing Commission at a salary of \$1800. The work was interesting, steady and of value to the cattlemen, but unfortunately it lasted only one week. For reasons known only to himself, God, and other interested parties, among whom were not counted the ranchers, the Governor suddenly vetoed the bill which established the Commission.

I sadly packed my traps and returned to the Capitol. There I was shunted into the State Purchasing Department, where I was placed ostensibly to serve as a stenographer, this time at the rate of \$1500, and with promises of more to come. The work was constant and would have been monotonously pleasant had it not developed that my actual duties were to act as Father Confessor to the two chief assistants, who dearly hated one another, and to connive with each to get the other's job. Four months of this, even though I was given a ten-dollar raise and a promise of still more to come, were enough.

A few days ago I resigned. I had no better job in view; I have none yet. Nevertheless I am glad to be away from it, from the dull routine, the kowtowing, the meaningless

and endless rolls of red tape, the handshaking, and the lip service.

Perhaps I am lacking in gratitude, though I think not. Three years' loss of self-respect is little for which to be grateful, and I think that loss is fair exchange for three years' uncertain board and lodging, for three years of day-to-day employment, and for three years of "work" that a Chinese coolie, or for that matter a jackass, could do as well.

Yet, strangely enough, I am grateful—grateful for the best lesson in civics and civil government a young person can have. I know now that "free exercise of the ballot" means merely the opportunity to choose between a scoundrel and a knave; I know that against such rabble-rousing sentiments as *The New Deal*, *The More Abundant Life*, and *A Chicken in Every Pot*, sincerity in any form has as much hope as has a frog against the *Queen Mary*; and I am strongly suspicious that words such as *Democracy* are just words, nothing more. For after all, is a Democracy which has to stoop to these idiocies, which has to *buy* votes and public opinion, is it morally so much greater than those governments which force votes out at the point of a bayonet?

I don't know. I'm merely asking.

SPORTS WRITERS ARE ALWAYS WRONG

BY ELIOT B. SPALDING

AMERICAN sports writers are read daily by the most reverent public ever enthralled by any set of literary men since the beginning of time. The morning hallelujahs of the Swamis of Sport are propped up against a million sugar bowls, and their afternoon amens are echoed by straphangers from coast to coast. When it comes to molding public opinion, they put University and Pulpit to shame. Like Aeolus of old, they sit at the controls of a mighty wind machine: they blow hot, and thousands of poor boobs fight their way to the box office; they blow cold, and great spectacles fizzle out into dismal floperooes. Nowadays, boys who dream of becoming aviators, architects, or Economic Royalists are misguided in their thinking. The real goal for a lad with a lust for power is to become the proprietor of a fat column of type on the sports page of a metropolitan newspaper. There he can write, if not live, like a king.

The sports writer's year is passed amid a succession of glittering

scenes: in gigantic arenas the fastest, strongest, and trickiest of the land vie for his approval. Yet the swami himself is a far more interesting phenomenon than the combats he describes. A salesman of thrills, he has a talent for being perpetually excited; life to him is either chills or fever, and it is fever more often than chills. He sees everything as twice its normal size and balloons it with the vocabulary of a carnival shill. He thinks of himself as a bored and jaded observer, yet upon the slightest provocation he goes native and howls like a banshee. He prides himself on his expert knowledge, yet in his major predictions he is almost invariably wrong.

Not to go back into unpleasant history any farther than 1936, do you remember Brevity, called by the experts, almost without exception, "The Wonder Horse" and "greater than Man O' War"? Whatever became of him? And what about the Associated Press poll of baseball writers who overwhelmingly predicted the victory

of St. Louis and Detroit in races won by the two New York teams? And "the irresistible Minnesota football machine"—crumpled by Northwestern? And, best of all, the Louis-Schmeling prizefight. One awe-stricken scribe declared that Louis seemed to be "the most perfect human fighting machine the world at present or perhaps ever had seen"; when the rain caused a twenty-four-hour postponement of the battle, another authority averred that the "big white dope" had "gained a short but merciless reprieve from the sepia headsman", and added that "except for the downpour, Schmeling would have had his hatcheting over and be curing himself in the hospital calm of a downtown hotel where he could take inventory of his agonies, including the general after-effect of a train wreck and a face full of surgical fiddlegut". When Schmeling knocked Louis out, the blow probably hurt the swamis more than it hurt Joe, but it is doubtful if it did them any lasting good. They slowed down temporarily to lick their wounds and repent of their follies, but this was only the most temporary of temporary phenomena. For the swami is nothing if not buoyant in spirit. His belief in his powers of prophecy is almost pathological.

That he will go on calling them wrong till the end of time was proved last Summer in the Louis-Farr imbroglio, the outcome of which was not correctly predicted by a single swami in America. The plain truth, of course, is that the sports writer, with certain shining exceptions, is not a sports expert at all. He is merely a man with a vocabulary who sits on the outside looking in.

Much of his "expert" knowledge the swami gains secondhand by reading "experts" as remote from reality as himself. Thus he names to All-American teams players whom he has never seen in action; and is tremendously surprised when they go out for professional football and are bowled over by hill-billy hard guys of whom he never heard. Compelled by fate to be a rolling stone, he naturally gathers scant moss. He must dance attendance on a Davis Cup match today, a swimming meet tomorrow, and a horse race the day after that. Fate compels him to bite off more than he can chew. And when his predictions go sour, does he stand up and take his beating like a man? Sometimes, but not often. Usually he runs, not walks, for the nearest alibi, emitting a dense smokescreen to cover his dismay. There is more than one way of

implying that a contest was in the bag or that the judges had defective eyesight, and the swami is master of them all. The apostle of sport, it seems, is not always a model of sportsmanship himself.

The swami has also a delightful habit of hailing an ordinary athlete as a superman, and then turning on him when he fails to live up to the inflated reputation. Unhappy is the lot of the synthetic superman who fails to deliver in Frank Merriwell fashion: his failure exposes the exaggerated absurdity of the swami's predictions to the public eye, and this—according to the swami's code—is the one unpardonable sin. The seer is touched in a sensitive spot—his vanity—and his reaction is likely to be both violent and vituperative. This point was well illustrated in Boston during the Spring of 1936 when Tom Yawkey's expensive ball club was hailed in terms that would put a Flag Day orator to shame. On the Sunday before the baseball season opened, one sports writer was quoted in a double-truck headline as stating that the "RED SOX WILL WIN FIRST FLAG SINCE 1918". The story accompanying the headline referred to "our star-studded, platinum-plated Red Sox, first million-dollar club ever assembled". The

players on this fabulous nine were hailed as "our heroes", and "the slugging Foxx, the scintillating Cramer, the colorful Manush, the cocky McNair, and the enigmatic Marcum" came in for special attention. "It doesn't appear to be in the cards," said the author, "for the club ever to be far below the roof." All of which made inspirational reading for the Boston fans.

Yet less than three months later, when the Red Sox were in second place, nine and one-half games behind the Yankees, the same newspaper broke out with a feature article under the heading "BRAINLESS BASEBALL OF RED SOX MAJOR CAUSE OF STUNNING CRASH", in which the hapless players were indicted as follows: "They fall asleep on the base paths, they try to stretch hits when they're way behind, they throw to the wrong bases." And indeed it was not long before another writer in the same vineyard was beginning a story with this unusual lead: "The Red Flops, if they run true to form, will take a swan dive into the second division this afternoon after the Cleveland Indians take another belt at them."

II

But although he may be a failure as an expert, the swami is a wow as

a publicity man. Indeed, there are many who insist that here is where his real talent lies. It is not for nothing that the sports promoters feed him on the fat of the land and send him hampers of liquid fire at Christmas. This largesse bears fruit a hundred-fold in come-on columns and other ingenious box-office bait designed to tease the suckers through the turnstiles. Under the spell of the swami, who is himself under the spell of the promoters, wrestling matches between business partners are heralded as "real grudge battles", and lackadaisical contests between last-place baseball teams are billed as hot struggles for the top of the second division. The owner of the local ball club will be lauded to the skies for trying to give the city a winning team, when every sports writer in the town knows that the magnate has the ethics of a junk man and will die fighting before he will cough up any real cash to buy a player.

One doesn't have to look very far for a classic example of how the swamis operate to whoop up a heavyweight title fight. In fact, one has to look no farther than the case of James Braddock, ex-proprietor of the heavyweight crown. Before that surprising day when Braddock took Max Baer into camp, a writer

supposed to know stated that Braddock was "just an overgrown light-heavyweight who feels his years and who has been knocked bow-legged by half the followers of *le boxe* in this country". That was in 1935 and there was little about Jim's victory over Baer that would cause any honest observer to change his mind. Yet two years later when Braddock, who had gone to extremes of pacifism in defense of his title, finally signed with Louis for a title bout, the sport-page literati suddenly began to see great signs of promise in Gentleman Jim. Although they couldn't quite bring themselves to pick him as the winner, they lauded him for his fighting heart, his masterful generalship in the ring, and his lethal right that might win. This may or may not have been good sports writing, but it was good box office, and that's what counts.

On the morning of every heavyweight fight, the swamis break out with just-before-the-battle statements from each of the fighters. These statements, in which each man invariably predicts that he will win by a knockout, are couched in English that would do credit to an Oxford don. The comparison between these polished state papers and the "dese an' dose" remarks which the fighters breathe into the

microphones after the fight is always startling. Radio listeners may be pardoned for wondering whether the champ who croaks over the ether that "I tags him on da button in da foist" can possibly be the same fellow who was quoted in the morning papers as saying: "I intend to wage a clean but aggressive contest and am confident that I shall floor my opponent in an early round."

News from the Spring training camps of big league ball clubs, and the mid-week dope stories on college football practice, are also among the most inane forms of sports writing. If they serve any useful purpose other than a box-office build-up, it is hard to discover. Even the public, which is notoriously slow to catch on, is growing weary of these evangelistic efforts. The fan has learned that the halfback who runs wild in practice scrimmage on Thursday is likely to be thrown for a row of butter cakes on Saturday afternoon, and that the rookie third-baseman who can't miss in Florida goes back to Little Rock when the team heads north. Here is a touching example of the pitiful stuff wired north by industrious baseball scribes: "Failing to adhere to that ancient axiom 'It will never get well if you pick it', Joe Prize

—better known as Pryzbycki when he first hit camp—is walking around with a cocoon on his chin from an infected pimple." Was it for this that Morse invented the telegraph?

Despite the evidence that the swami is not necessarily ordained of God to practice his eminent profession, he insists on regarding himself as something more than an ordinary working newspaperman. When he grows philosophical, he thinks of his calling as co-equal with the professions of Medicine, Law, Science, and the practice of the Fine Arts. Having sold the publishers so successfully on the value of sports-writing to growing newsstand circulation, the swami is now selling the public the idea that he is a man of scholarly parts engaged in the practice of a deep, difficult, and socially significant science.

In this connection, there is a common impression that better writing is found on the sports pages of our newspapers than in any other department. The sports writer is allowed more freedom, it is argued, and therefore he turns out a better product. This is one of those happy analyses that would be beautiful if true. Concise writing is good writing, and the swami is anything but concise. Does he

come right to the point and tell us that Princeton beat Cornell at football by a score of 41 to 13? Not the swami. He goes into a trance, summons the spirits from the vasty deep, and erupts with something like this:

The pent-up dynamite of Princeton's attack exploded like bursting shell-fire in Palmer Stadium today, and the thirsting Tiger went on a scoring rampage that buried Cornell under a 41 to 13 score.

Indeed, it is devoutly to be hoped that the accepted standards of good sports writing do not become the accepted standards of writing in the other departments of our newspapers. How would conservative readers of the financial news like to pick up their morning papers and find this staring them in the face?

Striking with devastating fury in the first ten minutes of a sensational directors' meeting here today, President Pug Bickerstaff of the Magenta Bank and Trust Company, a highly-g geared, beautifully co-ordinated financial machine, clawed his competitors badly throughout, giving the greatest display of statistical pyrotechnics ever seen in a local board room. . . .

III

But weirder things than these come over the wires during the Fall, and we read of the Gophers bull-dogging the Long Horns, the Horned

Frogs ham-stringing the Razor Backs, the Mustangs harpooning the Owls. And anyone who will take the trouble to peruse the Sunday sports pages during the football season will be struck with the fact that the sports writers, instead of being fellows with a high degree of originality, employ a standardized and surprisingly uniform patter in describing Saturday's big games. Stadia are always "mammoth", games are always "thrill-packed", and the spectators are continually being left "limp with excitement". Air attacks are always either "dazzling" or "soundly conceived", a series of first downs is always "a brilliantly sustained offensive", and teams are always "rising to the heights" or making "sensational surges in the closing minutes of the game". There is no drought of adjectives, the word "brilliant", to mention only one, being found in almost every column. When writers lavish vocabularies like these on a few college boys pushing each other around a plot of grass, one can't help wondering what reservoirs of language they would tap to give an adequate description of the Day of Judgment.

The more one reads the swami's stuff, the more one is convinced that his talk of being a bored and jaded observer is nothing but a

pose, and a pretty transparent one at that. The swami likes to think of himself as a sophisticated fellow unmoved by the thrills he sells to the multitudes; but when the mood is on him, no one can throw a fit like the Swami himself. During the quiet days of the week he may write of sports in ironic vein, but put him at the ringside or up in a stadium press box on Saturday, and he is capable of a sustained emotional orgy that would put a witch doctor to shame. When the heat is on, he believes his own stuff. Scratch a swami and you will find a sentimentalist every time.

The following lines, taken from a description of the Notre Dame victory over Ohio State in 1935, show the heights of mysticism to which a swami may rise when the spirit is on him:

If there is such a thing as an avenue through the clouds down which those who have passed on may gaze at the transient happenings in this earthly theater, old "Rock" and those others up there must have felt their hearts swell at this finish today. The spirit of the "Four Horsemen" finally rode on this field and rode into the sod what, after the first half, the experts were all calling "the greatest team they'd ever seen".

Commenting on the same game, another seer confessed that

the more fanciful sports authors saw visions of George Gipp — others say they saw Rockne calling those inspired plays. I don't know what it was, but I'm sure it was there.

Indeed, it would be a sobering experience for any swami to go back through the files and see how excited he became five years ago over something that most people forgot within twenty-four hours, and in which no one — not even the swami — has more than a remote interest today. As a matter of fact, it might be a good idea to pass a law making it compulsory for every swami to re-read his more purple efforts once a year. Such legislation would undoubtedly have wide popular support, except among those who are opposed to cruel and unusual punishments. But whether the law would produce in the swami an adult attitude toward life is a different story. The odds are against any lasting reform. He will probably go on whooping up muscle-bound heroes and seeing things double until the end of time. He can't help it. He's built that way.



WASHINGTON PRESS CONFERENCE

By JAMES K. MARTEL

THE press conference was not invented by the master minds of the New Deal, yet in Dr. Roosevelt's Washington it has grown and flourished into such an eloquent institution that it overshadows the daily routine activities of some 1000 assorted journalists. This system of disseminating more and more of the government's propaganda through orthodox press channels has been building up ever since politicians, like Labor leaders and Communists, first learned that publicity is priceless, and that a few dollars invested in hand-outs will produce more votes than an equal amount squandered for free beer on Election Day. But there are times when the Washington correspondents like to get certain delicate information directly from the lips of the head man — occasions when a carefully-worded "off the record" or "background" statement may be quoted judiciously. Under these conditions, the press conference becomes a pregnant event indeed, based as it is on the premise that a spoken pronun-

ciamento has a better chance of making Page One than a mimeographed release.

Such titillating séances with the press are held with more or less regularity in Washington by Dr. Roosevelt, by the members of his Cabinet, by some senators, by some representatives, and by all other federal jobholders of minor rank who can entice reporters to their offices by promises of juicy news. The technique displayed at these conferences varies with the importance of the topic and the personality of the host. The meetings range in character from the informal receptions held by James A. (Call Me Jim) Farley to the dignified soirées at which Secretary of State Cordell Hull gravely discusses International Affairs with the cream of the Capital's leg-men. But the underlying purpose of all these democratic gatherings, from the politician's point of view, is to get as much propaganda into as many newspapers as is possible. For this reason, it is interesting to analyze the tactics employed by the

nation's leading public servants in their encounters with the press. Such data may be conveniently catalogued as follows:

The Lion Arrives

A week or two before the first official conclave of each session of Congress the word is passed around Washington that William Edgar Borah, the Lion of Idaho, has arrived and is about to go into a huddle. This is just another instance of the manner in which the Constitution is being flouted. The Norris Amendment fixes the date for the opening of Congress; but everybody in Washington knows that the real opening day is the one upon which Borah arrives and holds his first press conference.

The news is quickly spread that the Gentleman from Idaho will be glad to see the press at 3 P.M. in the Senate Office Building. A stream of taxicabs loaded with reporters, cameramen, and flashlight bulbs immediately proceeds to Capitol Hill. Before the hour set for the meeting, the Senator's office is jammed and photographers already are standing on chairs. The Lion sits behind his desk, looking austere. At the stroke of 3, the reporters, three or four talking at once, begin the questioning. The Senator is asked whether he would

support a Constitutional amendment to give the federal government more power. He is noncommittal, but the reporters may say for him that he is against monopoly. How does the Senator stand on the tax question? Well, that depends, but he thinks monopolies should be abolished. The questioning goes on for an hour. The international situation, the CIO situation, the farm situation — every situation is discussed and dissected. Cameramen set off flash-bulbs. Reporters wear out their pencils and borrow copy paper from one another. Finally, when nobody can think of a new situation to introduce, the conference ends and the correspondents go back to their offices to type and telegraph, at press-rate collect, the words of wisdom freshly arrived from Idaho.

No one seems to be able to give a rational reason for the popularity of Borah press conferences or to explain why the Gentleman from Idaho can, year in and year out, command more publicity than anybody in the Senate. Senator Borah represents one of the smallest States; his influence in the Senate has dwindled virtually to nothing; he is a power in no political bloc. Yet when he speaks, headlines blossom on a thousand front pages.

Any Sewers Today?

The receptions of the Hon. Honest Harold Ickes are of a more routine nature. Every Tuesday morning and Thursday afternoon, a truck-load of undertaker's chairs is dumped in the hall outside the office of the Secretary of the Interior, Public Works Administrator, Oil Administrator, etc., etc. The chairs are quickly taken inside and arranged, classroom fashion, before the desk of the Secretary of the Interior, etc., etc. The correspondents, mostly "regional men" representing groups of newspapers in various geographical sections of the country, enter and take their places. (There was a day — when the Public Works Administration was always almost ready to do something — when these conferences were well attended, but since Harry Hopkins, in the building across the street, has taken over nearly all the spending for Relief, the attendance has dwindled.)

Only careful preparation prevents the Ickes conferences from being among the duller in Washington: but this preparation occasionally results in headlines. Most of the correspondents are more interested in whether Muncie or Kalamazoo is going to get an appropriation for a sewer than in broad

general policies. This is regrettable from the viewpoint of publicity, because only Muncie or Kalamazoo cares. To remedy this situation, Mike Strauss, the Department's able publicity man, has evolved a plan. Before each conference, Ickes rehearses one or two wisecracks which Mike, with his long newspaper experience, is pretty certain will make Page One. Then Mike tips off trusted members of the press corps to ask questions that will give the Secretary an opportunity to voice his bright remarks.

Damn!

Harry Hopkins, the World's No. 1 carefree spender, used to hold some of the most popular conferences in town, but recently his meetings with the gentlemen of the press have become few and far between. Too many times lately the genial Harry has discovered that certain newspapermen have come around to the belief that the shooting of Santa Claus might not be such a bad idea after all.

Hopkins used to hold his press conferences immediately after the sessions presided over by Ickes. It was this circumstance that did much to keep alive the famous Ickes-Hopkins feud. The first question at a Hopkins press conference

almost invariably started thusly: "Secretary Ickes just said —" and continued with controversial comment selected from Honest Harold's statements. The plan frequently brought a printable retort.

There is nothing of the lecture room about Hopkins' press conferences. They are held in his bare office in a huge building rented by the government to house a small part of the WPA. Reporters stand about, sit on desks, and exchange banter. The chief attraction of a Hopkins press conference is the sometimes spicy comment of the Great Spender, comment mixed with mild and often printable profanity. The word *damn* bears the same relation to a news story that it does to the lines of the heroine in a play. It is supposed to be sure-fire.

The Hopkins press conferences reached a high point when Harry remarked that some of the New Deal critics were "too damn dumb" to understand his boondoggling activities.

The Lady Speaks

Perhaps there are no press conferences from which reporters stay away in larger numbers than those of Madame La Secretary Perkins. They are held at infrequent intervals; they invariably start long after

the scheduled hour. Reporters are marched through a series of wood-paneled offices to the sanctum of the Secretary, who, wearing one of her three-cornered hats, awaits behind her large desk. Madame Secretary greets each correspondent and then invariably reads a long report on employment or kindred subjects. Reporters already have copies of the report and can read it themselves, if they are interested. Following the reading, Madame indicates she will answer questions. Speaking with an extremely noticeable broad "a", she makes a speech following each question. Seldom does the speech have any particular bearing on the question. The correspondents finally break away, individually resolving that the time would have been better spent at the Press Club bar.

Billions and Billions

When Secretary Morgenthau ascended to the heights of a Cabinet position, he was perhaps the most timid of the New Dealers in handling the press. That timidity is wearing off. A somewhat different crowd attends the Morgenthau conferences—very informal, with reporters standing about the Secretary's desk. Here are found the financial sharks who discuss the gold content of the dollar, inflation,

foreign exchange, and similar obtuse subjects. To the garden variety of reporter, most of the conversation might as well be in Greek. There has been polite speculation as to how much of it, at times, might be over the head of the Secretary himself.

Smoke Rings

Attorney General Cummings passes out cigars at his press conferences.

It's a Fine Day

There probably is nothing in the world a newspaperman resents so much as being patronized. That is one of the reasons why Secretary Roper's conferences are so poorly attended. Reporters sit around a long glass-covered table. Press agents, assistant secretaries, and various other functionaries sit on davenport and chairs around the walls. Talking stops as a door opens at one end of the room and the Secretary emerges. "Good morning, young men," he says, with the unction of a Y.M.C.A. secretary. "It is a fine day, isn't it?"

The Secretary seats himself at the head of the table and usually commences by reading a statement. Aside, he instructs one of his numerous assistants to be sure to see that the "young men" are supplied

with copies. The statement frequently is so innocuous that the "young men" don't take the trouble to carry away their copies.

A question from a reporter usually provokes a sermon. These talks contain much data on Brotherly Love and Good Will Toward Men. There seldom is any news.

Man With a Bull-Tongue Plow

Here again — in Secretary Wallace's conferences — there is something of a schoolroom atmosphere. The chairs arranged in front of the Secretarial desk are of a better quality and more comfortable than those in the Ickes classes, and the conferences are usually the longest in town. Here are seen reporters and writers seldom encountered in other similar meetings — experts on cotton, peanuts, potatoes, wheat, corn, hogs: correspondents of rural journals and farm publications. There also is a generous number of plain reporters and political writers, for it is in these conferences that some of the weirdest of the New Deal theories are expounded.

Frequently with his feet on his desk, usually with his hair in his eyes, the Secretary of Agriculture is completely informal. He laughs easily, answers most questions frankly. Some of the conversation is intended only for the agriculture

and commodity experts, but frequently there develops a theory or a plan that makes headlines. From these conferences have come the stories of the plowing under of crops, of the killing of pigs, of drought relief activities, of crop insurance, and of many other amazing developments in the march toward Utopia.

Reporters leaving the conferences pass the big wall mural depicting nearly nude ladies, completely nude children, and Apollo-like gentlemen, all representing the Spirit of American Agriculture. The office of the egregious Rexford Guy Tugwell used to be nearby. Agriculture Department officials explain that they are not responsible for the mural, that it was a product of the Hoover Administration. But they refuse to fix responsibility for Tugwell.

Hi, Jim!

Now here is a press conference! James A. Farley doesn't hold them often, but when he does everybody attends. There usually is a considerable wait in the big reception room, but finally the reporters and photographers are ushered into the private office, only a shade smaller than the main concourse of Washington's Union Station. Jim is seated behind a desk, his face red,

his smile broad. He greets everybody by first name. Nearly all the correspondents call him Jim. There is a great air of hilarity. Everybody tries to say something funny and Jim tries to wisecrack back. It is old-home week in Washington's most magnificent Cabinet office.

The questions have to do with politics. One doesn't have to be present long to understand that Jim is seeing the press in his capacity of Democratic National Chairman and not as Postmaster General. When somebody—perhaps a young reporter who doesn't know his way around—asks something about the Post Office Department, there is an embarrassed pause. Farley, however, is never ruffled. He merely suggests that the questioner talk to the First, Second, or Third Assistant Postmaster General.

Many of the questions have to do with who is going to be given what job. The jobs under discussion range from Cabinet posts to minor party appointments. It is in this room that the future of many a Democrat is decided. It is here that members of Congress are appraised and marks of merit or demerit placed against their names. But Farley seldom reveals what is in his mind. He talks in generalities, exchanges quips, singles out

individuals with whom he engages in good-natured arguments.

There seldom is more than a paragraph or two of news in a Farley conference, but everybody agrees that a good time was had by all.

International Incident

A dozen or so correspondents stand in a rather dimly lighted room in which there is a table. At the head of the table is a high-backed leather chair. Conversation is subdued. A door at one end of the room opens and the Hon. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, emerges. He walks to the chair and stands behind it. Everyone remains standing. Questions are respectfully asked. The Secretary answers in a slightly lisping voice, speaking in a tone so low that the reporters have to strain to hear him. He evades direct answers in the best diplomatic manner. Occasionally he is prompted by Mike McDermott, dean of government press agents. Seldom is there a direct statement. The Secretary of State, like the President, never is quoted directly. He is the only Cabinet member to whom such a rule applies. But the correspondents may—and do—draw inferences.

State Department conferences

are held daily. They are attended by the representatives of the Communist press, a few representatives of foreign newspapers, and correspondents regularly assigned to the Department. Nearly all the latter are self-made experts on foreign affairs and jealous of their standing. Each has a Third Secretary's baton in his knapsack.

The Main Tent

The lobby of the executive wing of the White House is crowded. A group of reporters leans against a door at the left; they have been standing there for half an hour. It is time for the semi-weekly opportunity to question the President. At long last the door against which the group has been leaning opens and the whole crowd files through a passageway into the office of the Great Democrat. The men who have been leaning against the door are the reporters regularly assigned to the White House. They have been standing there so that they can be the first inside and thus approach nearest to the Throne. They carry on a conversation in undertones with the President while the rest of the correspondents distribute themselves about the room. The crowd becomes so dense that to all but a few the only evidence of the *Führer's* presence is the blue

smoke of a cigarette rising from a spot to one side of the room.

The Presidential office is almost circular in shape, with a door and windows opening to the spacious rear lawn. In Summer the door is open and one of the White House dogs frequently wanders in to interrupt the session while he is being petted. The President sits with his back to the windows, the curtains of which are decorated with the shield of the United States. His desk is cluttered with papers and with numerous gadgets, ash trays, and cigarette lighters. At one corner is the famous wire basket in which reposes unfinished business. Sometimes particularly unpleasant business lies there for weeks — sometimes seemingly forever. The objects on top of the Presidential desk, of course, can be seen only by the reporters standing nearest. These reporters also are the only ones who can see sitting beside the President his three secretaries, son James, Marvin McIntyre, and Steve Early. A Secret Service man always stands directly behind the Presidential chair.

Presidential press conferences are no more formal than those of most Cabinet members, although in the Executive Presence reporters remain standing. Dr. Roosevelt, like his Postmaster General, calls as

many reporters as possible by their first names. There is something about being called "Bill" by the President of the United States that leaves a glow that lingers even as the news is being written.

But the reaction of many reporters to the Chief Executive has changed in recent months. At the beginning of the First New Deal Reich, he had the boys eating out of his hand, but as time went on many of them cooled off. A number of causes, in addition to the revelation of New Deal policies, contributed to this change. One was the President's insistence that he did not appreciate comment on his statements, that he preferred straight reporting of the kind that could be done by a stenographer. Another was his habit of "bawling out" before everyone certain reporters who had written something that had displeased him. Another was the growing feeling that Dr. Roosevelt secretly — and sometimes not so secretly — held most of them in contempt. Once when a visiting delegation was conducted into his office immediately after a press conference, the New Deal Chief laughingly told about the "silly" questions that the newspaper boys had just been asking him. So now it is necessary for him to strive a little harder, to speak a

little softer, to do a bit more cajoling than in the beginning.

The signal for the opening of the conference is a call of "All in!" shouted by a Secret Service man stationed at the office door.

"I haven't any news today," says America's best-known radio voice from below the cigarette smoke.

Questioning begins. The *Führer* thrusts and parries. His mood changes from instant to instant. To one question there will be a blunt answer, to another an evasion. Frequently a question will provoke a long explanation, usually "off the record". Nobody is permitted to quote the President directly, but every word that is said gets into the newspapers in one form or another — and Dr. Roosevelt knows it. Presidential press conferences are great places for sending up trial balloons without risking direct responsibility.

The stock explanation that "I haven't any news today" means

little. Sometimes conferences that have started with these words have included carefully thought-out Presidential statements that reveal shifts in the New Deal wind, statements that send the stock market up or down, that presage new taxes, or new policies, or new assumptions of power. Sometimes, as in the Ickes conferences, some reporter of the inner circle about the desk asks a previously prepared question, designed to bring forth such a statement.

Presidential conferences invariably end with one of the regular White House correspondents murmuring, "Thank you, Mr. President." This usually happens just as another correspondent is about to ask a question to which his editor has telegraphed he must get an answer. The reporters file out of the office and then rush for the telephones. The world is waiting to learn what new and amazing scheme is afoot.



STALIN: PORTRAIT OF A DEGENERATE

By WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

OLDEST of the modern-style dictatorships, pioneer in perfecting the technique of the Brutalitarian State, the Soviet Union today is experiencing an unmistakable internal crisis, reflected in wholesale executions and sweeping arrests of leading figures in the Soviet political, economic, military, and intellectual bureaucracy. In the first year of "Stalin's Constitution", which its author modestly characterized as "the most democratic in the world", between 200,000 and 350,000 Soviet citizens were exiled for alleged political offenses. More Communist heads have fallen, either literally or figuratively, during the last year than in any year which has passed since the Revolution took place two decades ago. Hence, if one should judge Russia not by the testimony of a hostile critic but simply by the official records of treason and sabotage trials and the allegations in the Soviet press, it could reasonably be regarded as a madhouse.

Railway executives all over the

country are accused of systematically wrecking trains and failing to carry out repairs; managers of factories and mines confess that they have been devoting all their energies to preventing the enterprises under their control from functioning properly; agricultural officials have been denounced for castrating bulls and failing to provide proper life-mates for Soviet cows, all in the interests of Hitler, Japan, and the arch-villain, Trotsky; a son of Trotsky who had voluntarily remained in the Soviet Union (of all persons the least likely to attempt an overt act against the existing régime) is indicted for trying to poison the workers in the factory where he is employed as an engineer. Such intensified terrorism of the last year has presented all but the most mercenary of the foreign "friends of the Soviet Union" with a distinctly awkward dilemma. If the accusations of widespread sabotage and treachery are true, an amazingly high proportion of the founding fathers of the Soviet Re-

public (including six of the seven men who stood highest in the Communist Party at the time of Lenin's death) are thieves and scoundrels of the first caliber. More than that, the list of thieves and scoundrels is capable of indefinite extension, since almost every day brings news of the arrests of more "unmasked saboteurs and class enemies". With disconcerting celerity, the Soviet hero of today becomes the Fascist-Trotskyist villain of tomorrow. Nowhere in the world is there such a short step from eminence to execution, from prestige to prison.

If, on the other hand, the charges, in whole or in part, are frame-ups, the present state of affairs in Russia can only be regarded as a cruel and capricious despotism, strongly reminiscent of the governing methods of the more unbalanced medieval Czars and of the Roman Emperors. Whichever alternative may be preferred, the fiction of the Soviet Union as the one land of prosperity in the present and the hope for the future, where élite leaders with no thought of self are guiding the proletariat and the peasantry to ever greener pastures, can scarcely survive.

Any crisis of the Soviet Union is inevitably a crisis of its dictator.

For Stalin, with more right than Louis XIV, can say: "*L'état, c'est moi.*" Despite the goldbrick assurances of the new Constitution, which ironically went into effect just when the wave of terror was at its height, the Soviet State is not governed by democratically elected Soviets. It is not even a dictatorship of an entrenched revolutionary minority, the Communist Party. It is subject to personal rule of the most absolute and arbitrary type, with all powers, from the summary "rubbing out" of political suspects to the prohibition of distasteful books, plays, and operas, vested in Stalin.

Neither the canonized Marx nor the mummified Lenin wields much influence on the course of Soviet affairs today. Stalin does not hesitate to flout the most sacred dogmas of these two pillars of the Communist faith whenever it suits his policy or convenience to do so. The sudden dissolution, some four years ago, of the Society of Old Bolsheviks is a symbol of the cavalier treatment which "Old Bolshevik" ideas have been receiving.

Nor does the Communist Party count for much in practical politics. Its membership has been combed again and again until everyone with any trace of opposi-

tionist ideas has been excluded, leaving a residue of acquiescent jobholders. In fact, the number of members who have been expelled now far exceeds the number of Party members in good standing, a fact which should not be overlooked in measuring the hidden forces of discontent in Russia. The lot of the man who has been a Party member and then has been sacked is much harder than that of the citizen who has never carried a Party card. He is the last to be given any desirable post, the first to be arrested when a new hunt for spies gets under way.

Stalin has provided little material for an inquiring biographer. Everything written about him in the Soviet Union since his rise to supreme power has necessarily been couched in a style of adulation suitable to an Oriental potentate. His published writings are topical discussions of political problems or inferior restatements of the ideas of Marx and Lenin, revealing little of his own personality.

But Lenin, who knew him as well as anyone else, described him with a characterization that could not be bettered for brevity and accuracy. "Stalin," Lenin wrote in his suppressed political testament, "is a rough and disloyal man."

II

Stalin's character was formed in a hard school. A native of Georgia, the picturesque mountainous country which lies to the south of the massive Caucasus Mountains, he was the son of a shoemaker named Djughashvili. The name Stalin, derived from the Russian word for steel, was later assumed as a revolutionary pseudonym. Stalin was born a few days before Christmas; and his pious mother gave him the Biblical name of Joseph and destined him for the Church.

But the young Stalin was a victim of the Czarist thought-control system, on which he improved so much himself when he occupied the palaces of the Romanov dynasty. As a student in a theological seminary at Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, he was accused of carrying on agitation for proscribed Socialist ideas and expelled. He then entered on the nomadic, harassed life of the "underground" professional revolutionary, with the police constantly on his trail. The quality of extreme suspiciousness, so marked in Stalin's character, was doubtless developed by the widespread use of spies and *agents provocateurs* by the authorities. It became second nature to suspect every associate.

A noteworthy feature of Stalin's early career (on which he has been modestly silent) is his association with bandits in robbing banks and government shipments of money in order to provide funds for the Cause. One of his forays was accompanied by a bomb explosion in the crowded streets of Tiflis, with the result that many people were killed and wounded. Thus, Stalin received an early schooling in contempt for human life during his association with these Caucasian Robin Hoods — or Dillingers.

Unlike many Communist leaders, Stalin spent very little time outside of Russia. Twice he went abroad surreptitiously to attend obscure and little-noted Russian revolutionary congresses. But almost all his time was occupied in maintaining the illegal Bolshevik Party organization in Russia. Five times he was arrested and exiled; five times he escaped and resumed his activity. This fact speaks both for Stalin's iron persistence in pursuit of his goal and for the loose methods of guarding political exiles in Czarist Russia. Today, Stalin keeps his own far more numerous host of political exiles and prisoners under lock and key with greater efficiency.

Stalin was released from his last term of exile by the March Revo-

lution of 1917. His role during that year was comparatively inconspicuous. Lenin censured him sharply on one occasion for showing too much tendency to co-operate with the Kerensky Government in carrying on the war, although this blot on his record has been carefully expunged from the histories and textbooks of the Soviet Union. Not even his obedient chorus of flatterers has been able to produce evidence that he showed any special initiative or performed any outstanding feats during the Bolshevik Revolution in November, 1917. Stalin himself in one indiscreet speech admitted that Trotsky played the main role in the seizure of power in Petrograd, but subsequently took pains to contradict himself on this point.

During the civil war which raged in Russia from 1917 until 1921, Stalin served on various fronts as a political commissar. The beginning of his bitter personal feud with Trotsky dates from a dispute between the two men over the conduct of military affairs on the front at Tsaritsin (subsequently renamed Stalin-grad), where Stalin was commissar. Trotsky was endeavoring to build up a regular army with centralized leadership and firm discipline, while Stalin supported some

of the partisan commanders in the Tsaritsin region whom Trotsky regarded as insubordinate.

The hatred between Stalin and Trotsky was natural and inevitable, for they were strongly contrasted in character, temperament, and background. Trotsky was a cosmopolitan intellectual, at home in German and French as well as in Russian, prolific in ideas, venomous and brilliant in controversy. He was a notable orator, fiery, impulsive, with a keen sense for the dramatic phrase and gesture.

Stalin, on the other hand, had no ideas except those which he absorbed from more original minds. He was innocent of knowledge of any European language except Russian and during this phase of his career he sought the background as consistently as Trotsky craved the spotlight. He said and did nothing without the most careful calculation. He resented Trotsky's superiority in erudition and brilliance, studied his weaknesses, and methodically paved the way for his own emergence as Lenin's successor.

Opportunity came to him earlier than he had expected. Lenin's second breakdown in the Spring of 1923, followed by his death early in 1924, left the field open for a War of the Leninist Succession.

The Political Bureau, or highest steering committee of the Communist Party, consisted at this time of seven men, Trotsky, Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Bukharin, and Tomsky. It is interesting and instructive to call the roll of these names today. Zinoviev and Kamenev have been shot, and Tomsky hurried into committing suicide. Trotsky is an outlawed exile, and Rykov and Bukharin are awaiting their turns at the next Soviet political show trial, the kind of trial that never ends in acquittal. Here is the measure of what Stalin has done to the older generation of revolutionaries.

In 1923, Stalin easily recognized Trotsky as his most formidable rival. He formed a bloc with the other members of the Political Bureau, especially with the two who were at that time most influential, Gregory Zinoviev and Leo Kamenev. He had already transformed the office of General Secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee, which he held, from a minor technical post into a remarkable vantage point for the practice of machine politics. He exercised a more and more decisive influence in the selection of the provincial Party secretaries, who, in turn, dictated largely the choice of delegates to Party Con-

gresses. Zinoviev was Party boss in Leningrad and Kamenev in Moscow.

So, when the struggle for power set in, Trotsky found himself crushed beneath the powerful Party steamroller, with the aid of which he had himself, in the days when he shared with Lenin the leadership of the Revolution, disposed of inconvenient opponents. A nation-wide campaign against "Trotskyism" was set in motion; all sorts of obscure theoretical heresies were dug up from the remote past and laid to Trotsky's account; and the campaign did not end until he was removed from his potentially dangerous post as Commissar for War.

Once rid of Trotsky, it was a simple matter for Stalin to discard his quondam allies, Zinoviev and Kamenev, whose political downfall occurred in the Winter of 1925-26. The formation of a bloc between Trotsky and the disillusioned Zinoviev and Kamenev was also of no avail; Stalin by 1927 was strong enough to read all his open opponents out of the Party. Trotsky departed into banishment. Zinoviev and Kamenev remained in Russia, ultimately destined for the firing squad.

The turn of Rykov, Bukharin, and Tomsy was not long in com-

ing. They all protested against the tremendous toll of human sacrifice which was demanded by the program of industrialization and collectivization of agriculture on which Stalin had embarked. And all were promptly eliminated from responsible posts. Stalin filled up the Political Bureau with two types of members: nonentities, like Premier Molotov, and men who were too young to have played any conspicuous part in the Revolution and who were, therefore, entirely dependent on Stalin for their careers. Another feature of Stalin's appointments was that he systematically distrusted and discriminated against intellectuals. His satellites in the Political Bureau were all men like himself, of scant formal education and possessing no knowledge of any language but Russian.

III

Stalin's attitude toward personal publicity underwent a complete metamorphosis as soon as he felt himself securely installed in dictatorial power. Hitherto he had always covered himself with the authority of the Party. It was "The Party" that had solemnly proscribed first Trotsky, then Zinoviev and Kamenev. Stalin's name rarely

appeared in print. He worked potentially, but silently, behind the scenes.

Beginning with 1929 this attitude was changed. The floodgates of adulation were let down. Typical of the Byzantine flattery in which he basked was the following tribute from Kirov, the head of the Leningrad Party organization, whose assassination late in 1934 was the pretext for much of the terrorism of recent years:

It is difficult for one to imagine the figure of such a giant as Stalin. During the last years, during the time when we have worked without Lenin, we do not know of one change of our work, of one big slogan, enterprise or direction of our policy which was not initiated by Stalin. All basic work proceeds according to the instructions and initiative and under the leadership of Comrade Stalin. . . . The powerful will and colossal organizing talent of this man assure the Party the timely carrying out of great historical changes, connected with the victorious building up of Socialism. Everything that we achieved during the first Five-Year Plan was achieved on the basis of his instructions.

From 1929 until 1933 Stalin was the "Man of Steel", leading the drive for steel mills, tractors, tanks, poison-gas, and huge collectivized farms. In a revealing outburst of self-confidence, he exclaimed:

When we put the Soviet Union on an automobile and the peasant on a tractor, let the worthy capitalists, who

boast so loudly of their "civilization", try to overtake us.

But as often happens with natives of backward countries, Stalin's conception of civilization is a one-sidedly materialistic one. That millions of deaths from avoidable famine, innumerable political executions, the creation of huge serf colonies in Arctic wildernesses and tropical deserts, might have something to do with the quality of the "civilization" which he has been conferring on the Soviet Union has probably never occurred to him.

After the worst of the food shortage was over in 1933, Stalin for a short time struck a new note in his public declarations. It was a bowler-hatted, "gather ye rosebuds while ye may" pose which found expression in the frequent iteration of the sentiment: "Comrades, life has become merrier." The stern dictator paid an ostentatious and well-publicized visit to his mother in Tiflis, had himself photographed in fraternal conversations with buxom milkmaids who had received prizes for extracting record quantities of milk from their charges, and rivaled Hitler in responding graciously to the artless tributes of little girls.

But this interlude was a short one. The record of the last year,

with its fantastic allegations and wholesale blood-letting, indicates that Stalin is in a phase of degeneration, panicky despite his absolute power, making mountains out of molehills, and playing havoc both with his foreign prestige and with the efficiency of his internal régime by repeated lapses into wild, sometimes apparently unmotivated, terrorism.

There has been an unmistakable deterioration in his capacity for leadership, by comparison with his achievements of ten or even five years ago. Stalin in the 'Twenties might have won the applause of Machiavelli: Stalin today challenges comparison with Scarface Al Capone. Situations which he would have handled formerly by means of adroit, almost imperceptible maneuvers, without gore and without publicity, are now proclaimed to the world and emphasized by wholesale shootings. Absolute power is a severe test for the reason of any man. The autocrat publicly drinks in the adulation of sycophants and privately dreads the unseen assassin. Examples of insanity among Roman Emperors and Russian Czars are not uncommon.

In the nature of things, the outside world can have little positive evidence as to Stalin's mental con-

dition. But it seems beyond doubt that the qualities of suspiciousness and ruthlessness have grown in him beyond the very generous measure that may be considered normal for a dictator. One can imagine Stalin, paraphrasing the old Quaker of the story, staring hard at Molotov, Kaganovitch, or some other henchman who has thus far escaped denunciation and saying: "Everyone in the Soviet Union is a counter-revolutionist, a Trotskyist, and an agent of Germany and Japan except me and thee — and sometimes I have my doubts about thee."

IV

Stalin's degeneration as a dictator is especially marked if one considers that he should now have easier sailing than during the first years of "planned economy", from 1929 until 1933. At that time, whole classes of people were being economically uprooted and to some extent physically destroyed. Food conditions were alarming in the towns and desperate in the country districts. There was not enough food and clothing to go around, even for the middle and lower grades of the ruling Communist Party.

Soviet social conditions today

are certainly far from satisfactory. The peasants still wear uneasily the yoke of the new serfdom embodied in the collective farm. Large numbers of workers are bitterly resentful of the intensive speed-up that goes under the name of Stakhanovism. Squalid overcrowding, such as one would only find in the worst slums of America or Europe, remains the rule in the Soviet capital, where workers' housing is neglected while huge sums are spent on the Palace of Soviets and other gaudy public buildings. Yet material conditions have improved by comparison with 1931 and 1932. The improvement has been substantial for the bureaucracy, slight for the masses; but at any rate the downward trend in living standards which set in during 1929 and reached its low point in the Winter of 1932-33 has been checked. There is not so much visible cause for popular dissatisfaction.

But Stalin, who thrust his competitors out of the way after Lenin's death without bloodshed, who carried on through the difficult years from 1929 until 1933 without executions of prominent Communists and without apparent friction with the Red Army, now finds it impossible to get on without constant purges that are cal-

culated to rock his system to its foundations and to undermine the supports of his own power. The Stalin of 1925 is the best critic of the Stalin of 1938. In the former year he was attacking Zinoviev and Kamenev for desiring too drastic measures against Trotsky. He warned:

A policy of shedding blood is dangerous and contagious. One cuts off a head today, another tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow a third—then what remains of the Party?

It is true that Stalin's terrorism during the period 1929-1933 took far more lives than the executions of the past year. But it was more purposeful, more rational. Whatever one may think of the desirability of Stalin's objectives at that time, rapid industrialization, the introduction of collectivized agriculture, with the crushing of the individual farmer, these were at least comprehensible goals. To a fanatical mind, obsessed with the idea that Socialism is the road to the millennium, arrests and executions, famine, forced labor, and wholesale deportations could be justified as unpleasant but necessary steps toward the building of the new Utopia. For the recent killings, no such rationalization is possible. They indicate that Stalin today is becoming the victim of the

very qualities which contributed to his rise to power. The "roughness and disloyalty" in which Lenin saw the key to Stalin's character have reached proportions where they react unfavorably on the dictator's own interests, undermine his system, create an atmosphere of panic among his most devoted henchmen, and undo the effects of systematic propaganda among the masses. It must be discouraging for even the least intelligent Comrade in the lower ranks to awake one morning and read in his badly printed newspaper that some of the most admired chieftains of the "invincible" Red Army have been giving away secret plans to the enemy, or that leading railway and industrial executives have been working overtime arranging wrecks and explosions.

Roughness and disloyalty, however, are not mere personal qualities. Stalin has communicated them to his whole system, which is a police state beyond the dreams of Czar Nicholas I, sustained by an unprecedented system of mutual espionage. The virtuous son is supposed to denounce his kulak mother, exposing her to the death penalty, if she falls short in grain deliveries to the State in a hungry year. The wife is regularly

kept in Russia as a hostage for the return of the husband who goes abroad. If there are three Communists in an office, one may be sure that each is spying on and denouncing the other two.

This officially prescribed and cultivated "roughness and disloyalty" has recently been attaining a crescendo pitch in the Soviet system, as in Stalin's personality. High officials and Soviet newspapers vie with each other in issuing shrill appeals to Soviet citizens to spy on their neighbors, to avoid foreigners as they would the plague, to watch everywhere for the omnipresent "Trotskyists", "Fascists", "German and Japanese agents". Fear of espionage has become a nation-wide obsession. On the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, it was found necessary to revive the emergency institution of the first years of civil war, that is, the appointment of two Party overseers to watch the activities of every Red Army officer. This does not promise well for the efficiency of the Soviet arms in the event of war; such an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust is calculated to paralyze the swiftness of decision which often marks the difference between victory and defeat. The Soviet press contains abundant

evidence of the paralysis of initiative in industrial, economic, and literary life, as a result of the recent purges. One writer suggestively explained a long period of literary nonproductivity by citing an old Jewish proverb: "While a pogrom is going on, don't appear on the street."

V

The crisis of Stalin's personality is most closely interwoven with the crisis of the Soviet Union. While the degeneration of the dictator's capacity for leadership, the substitution of frantic and indiscriminate brutality for the earlier finesse, increase demoralization and weaken the country internally and externally, this very degeneration is hastened by the broad objective process of recovery from revolution which has clearly begun in Russia.

It is a law of history that the men who lead an extreme social revolt seldom survive to enjoy its fruits. France furnishes an excellent object lesson. The main actors on the revolutionary stage, Robespierre and Danton, Marat and Hébert, came to violent ends, mostly on the guillotine to which they had sentenced so many others. In the phrase of the great French philo-

sophical historian, Taine, the Revolution proved a crocodile, devouring its own young.

A Trotskyist publicist recently noted with pained surprise the regularity with which reaction follows revolution, and plaintively asked: Why does the Left make the Revolution and the Right the subsequent Constitution? The answer to this question is quite simple. Reasonably or not, most human beings want to live. And the revolutionary atmosphere, with its combination of lofty ideals and atrocious crimes, professions of world brotherhood and universal espionage, tall talk and short rations, is physically and psychologically unbreathable over a long period, even for people with as great capacity for self-torment as the Russians. Just as the stiff-necked reactionary régime carries within itself the seeds of revolution, so the inevitable excesses of revolution are the harbinger of subsequent reaction.

No matter how much terror and propaganda may be injected into him, the plain man finally becomes heartily sick of the obvious frauds of a revolutionary period, of the outlandish new rites which he is compelled to practice, of the lies and hypocrisies which he must profess to keep out of jail, of the

motley array of scoundrels, thieves, and morons who are always thrown to the top by a revolutionary upheaval. No words were more odious in England and France than *Puritan* and *Jacobin* after the people had a sufficiently long experience of rule by self-styled saints in the one case and by self-styled friends of the people in the other.

There have been many signs of a similar trend in Russia during the last few years. The normal instincts of self-advancement and self-enrichment have been reasserting themselves. New classes, with markedly differing living standards, have been formed. And for a time it seemed that this unavoidable process of stabilization after revolutionary storm, of restoring old inequalities under new names, of quietly burying those features of the revolutionary order which conflicted most obviously with common-sense and popular feeling, would be carried out under Stalin's own leadership.

As early as 1931, the dictator had come around to unequivocal belief in the necessity of unequal pay for unequal work. After 1933, the Thermidorian trend became much more marked. While remuneration in the higher ranks of the bureaucracy leaped upward, wages

and salaries in the lower brackets advanced at a snail's pace, if at all. Old military titles were restored. Authority and discipline were strengthened in regiment and factory, in home and school.

Stalin intimated that one of the most patently absurd Communist practices, the systematic discrimination in educational institutions and in public services in favor of horny-handed sons and daughters of toil, quite regardless of their intellectual qualifications, would be discarded. While the promises of civil and political liberty in the Soviet Constitution were obviously a sorry joke, this instrument did seem to presage greater equality between the various classes of the autocrat's subjects. The persistent purges of the Communist Party were mainly directed against its Left-wing elements, against those Trotskyists and others who still took the slogans of 1917 seriously.

It seemed as if Stalin might go down into history simultaneously as one of the makers and the chief destroyer of the Bolshevik Revolution, as Robespierre, Barras, and perhaps Napoleon rolled into one. But the events of the last months inspire grave doubts as to his ability to combine in his own person so many contradictory roles. It now seems increasingly probable that

he cannot escape the liquidation which he has meted out to such wide circles, not only of his enemies but of his original comrades.

Maximilien Robespierre, France's revolutionary dictator, went to the guillotine when his mania of suspicion had reached a point where no Jacobin, no matter how many aristocrats he might have butchered, could feel sure that his own name would not appear in the next proscription list. The mad Czar Paul of Russia was strangled by a group of officers who were apprehensive of sharing the fate of the many victims of his capricious ruthlessness. These are historical warnings which Stalin would do well to heed. His system, at least in time of peace, is pretty well insured against mass revolt. But the most absolute ruler, if he becomes too much of a public menace to his immediate entourage, may find himself eliminated by means of a palace *coup*.

Stalin's liquidation, if and when it should occur, would doubtless arouse hopes in quarters as far removed, geographically and politically, as Trotsky's refuge in Mexico

and the residence of the heir of the Romanov dynasty, "Czar" Cyril, in France. The political unsettlement that lasted for almost a century after the French Revolution indicates that a wide field of political possibilities would be opened up in Russia if the dictator should fall. But the most probable immediate sequel of Stalin's disappearance from the scene would be a government dominated by those leaders of the Red Army who have not been too closely associated with Stalin and those representatives of the moderate wing of the Communist Party who have escaped proscription. The Red Army, it may be noted, is far more representative of the country than the handpicked and much-purged Communist Party.

The broad swing away from internationalism and collectivism and toward nationalism and individualism in the Soviet Union is certain to continue, no matter how much terrorism may occur before some kind of stabilization is reached. Stalin's only alternatives, in the long view, are to swim with this tide or to be swept away by it.



EDITORIAL

The Boycott Road to War

WE HAVE been interested lately in the progress of a boycott against trade with two nations which for one reason or another certain elements in our population dislike. German goods have been boycotted for some time. The present German Government has treated Jews with great cruelty, and American Jews are taking it out on Germans in general by refusing to have anything to do with German-made products. Associated with these are a considerable number of non-Jewish Americans, some of whom join in the boycott out of sympathy with the Jewish motive, some because of the part which Hitlerian policies have been playing in Spain and Italy, and others because they are against the German Government on general principles. The more recent movement against Japanese goods is essentially the same. Most Americans like the Chinese quite well, respect their conspicuous good qualities, and are offended by the barbarity which the Japanese display in raiding their territory. Hence, if by

joining in a boycott they can help to cripple the Japanese and put a brake on their enterprise, they are glad to do it.

These sentiments are natural and respectable, and we have nothing to say against them. The boycott, in fact, is old in American history and has a place of honor in American tradition. We all know about the Colonial boycott on British goods — on tea, for example — and the boycott which Northern women exercised against cotton and other products of the Confederacy in the 'Sixties. We would say that in principle the boycott is probably quite all right, as long as those who do the boycotting are sure they know what it is that they are actually doing, and are willing to stand for it. We put it this way because we have noticed that some of our leading pacifists and anti-war Liberals are strong for the boycott against either the Germans or the Japanese or both. We cannot get it out of our heads that these busybodies do not quite know what it is that they are advocating,

or else that their indignation has proved itself too strong for their principles and has driven them into ways which are wholly inconsistent with the professions they have all along been making.

If anyone knowingly and deliberately advocates using the boycott as an instrument of *Schrecklichkeit*, we can understand him. We cannot go along with him, for we have a little prejudice against *Schrecklichkeit*, but we can at least understand him. If Mr. Untermeyer, for example, and Rabbi Wise are so angry at the German Government's treatment of the Jews that they would deliberately exterminate German men, women, and children, German cats and dogs, everything German that they can lay hands on, their advocacy of a boycott is understandable. Such advocacy is equally understandable, too, when made by those who are so worked up over military atrocities in China that they would lend a hand to any campaign of retaliatory frightfulness against anything and everything that is Japanese. But pacifists, by their very name, are not supposed to be so blindly bloodthirsty as all this, but quite the contrary. If we understand them, it is exactly because they want to put a stop to the rage of bloodthirst that they advocate a

boycott. Far from wishing to drop bombs on German or Japanese towns, and murder helpless women and children, they earnestly wish that all that sort of thing should cease. Their idea is that a boycott will so hamper and paralyze the warring governments that they will behave themselves and leave off murdering, maiming, and torturing people. We confess we cannot understand this idea, because as we see it, the boycott makes the condition of the victims a great deal worse instead of better.

We try to look at the proposition as fairly as we can. In order to make the warring governments come to terms, it seems clear that the boycott must be a hundred-per-cent effective. Governments "with their backs to the wall", as the saying goes, increase their frightfulness rather than lessen it. Their measures of desperation bear all the harder on the whole civilian population, their own as well as their enemy's. Hence, if the boycott is not a hundred-per-cent effective, if it does not cut off the offending government's resources so completely as to make further warfare impracticable, it merely stimulates the erring government to do its worst. An incomplete boycott bears really heavier on women and children than no boycott at all,

because a government which is merely put at bay by force of boycott will act just as it would if it were put at bay by force of arms. It will go on fighting all the more desperately, regardless of the privations and sufferings of its own women and children; and meanwhile it damages the enemy's women and children as much as possible.

So it seems to us that the boycott of German goods which Mr. Untermeyer and Rabbi Wise are advocating is only making things harder for their suffering brethren in Germany, because it is incomplete; and obviously it must therefore make things harder for American Jews who have any relationships, commercial or sentimental, existing in Germany. As long as it remains incomplete, it can do nothing to check Hitler in his course of persecution; nor will it tend at all to dissuade him from that course, but rather the contrary. Similarly the boycott against Japanese goods can tend neither to check nor dissuade Japanese imperialism in its buccaneering enterprise on Chinese soil, but rather the contrary.

Very well, then, the thing to do is to make the boycott a hundred-per-cent effective, which is what Mr. Untermeyer and Rabbi Wise

appear to be trying to do with regard to Germany, and the others with regard to Japan. Again we say we doubt that they are fully advised of the consequences. We doubt that they know just where a complete boycott would hit first and hit hardest. In the first case, suppose Mr. Untermeyer and Rabbi Wise succeeded in engineering a complete boycott which would tie Germany up tight as a white-oak knot, unable to sell anywhere and therefore unable to buy. Practically the whole country would be thrown into economic paralysis, with myriads of poor people out of work and therefore unable to eat. It would hamstring the government, no doubt, but meanwhile who would be the first sufferers? The Jews, certainly. We doubt that by the time the government collapsed there would be a Jewish man or woman left alive in Germany; and as for children, we believe King Herod would look like a pretty good fellow compared with Hitler.

In the second case, if a complete boycott of Japanese goods is organized, the Mikado's government would no doubt collapse, but before it did so, no end of Japanese men, women, and children would have collapsed of starvation, which is a slow, mean way to die; bomb-

ing would be preferable, one thinks, if one had to choose. Governments are always the last to suffer privation — indeed, worse luck, they never do — and the privation of their peoples, especially the poorer and more helpless sort among them, causes them no pangs. A really effective boycott would close down Japanese industry, throw the population out of work and out of food; but one cannot imagine any government desisting from an imperialist enterprise on this account until it was forced to face the absolute impossibility of going on. If human beings were only so constituted that they could eat six months and then fast six months, the population might tide itself over while the government was collapsing, and in that case the boycott might be used to some purpose; but human beings cannot do that. Every day or so they have to have a little something to go on with, even if only a handful of rice.

What we are driving at is the fact that the boycott is not a humane substitute for war, as the pacifists appear to regard it. On the contrary, when brought to perfection, it is an instrument of war, more deadly by far than bombs or guns, and bearing hardest on the most innocent and helpless part of

the population. The pacifists and Liberals ought surely to remember the infamous economic blockade maintained by the British against Germany for months after the Armistice. The effect of that was precisely the effect of a hundred-per-cent complete boycott. If the Allies had bombed every German town from Munich to Koenigsberg, they would not have slaughtered anywhere near as many helpless and inoffensive persons, women and children, as were slaughtered by that blockade. Again, we all remember the talk of applying sanctions against the Italian Government to make it give up the Ethiopian adventure; well, sanctions are a weapon of war, clearly enough, and if they are stringently enforced, their effect is precisely the effect of a full-strength economic boycott. Suppose all hands had brought Mr. Mussolini to a showdown, and told him that until he backed out of Ethiopia he would not be allowed to import or export as much as a box of matches. Naturally he would not have backed out; and in that case would Italian women and children be better off than if they had taken the chance of a bombing? We cannot see that they would be.

We hope the friends of the Op-

pressed will take our observations in good part and think them over. We mean merely to convey our impression that the pacifists have been perhaps misled into thinking that because the boycott does not look like a war-weapon it is not one. It does not work spectacularly, does not kill people with sudden violence, blasting their bodies to fragments; yet it is a war-weapon of the deadliest and most dreadful kind, which we believe the pacifists will be glad to be warned against as such. As for the anti-war Liberal, who is all against war until the drums beat for the war to end all wars and make the world safe for democracy, or some similar high and holy purpose, our observations are not addressed to him. The best we can say of him is also the worst, *i.e.*, that he is a Liberal; and among all created beings the Liberal is in particular the one with whom we can have no lot, no part, and no patience. The post-Armistice blockade of Germany was administered by a man out of the very top drawer of British Liberalism. In 1914, Liberalism was in control of both the British and American governments, and remained in control throughout the war. The terms of the Armistice and of the peace of Versailles were dictated by Liberals. In short, those most directly

responsible for the world's disorganized and dangerous condition at the present time were Liberals; and as for the fatuous pretensions of latter-day American Liberalism, they are simply a stench in the nostrils of all intelligent, honest, and decent men.

Little need be said concerning the support given German and Japanese boycotts by the Left-wingers. It must be obvious to readers of these pages that this support is merely part and parcel of the Party Line, just another whip with which to beat the Fascist dog. Such outfits as the American League for Peace and Democracy, if their crusades were ever successful, would turn out to be completely pro-war and pro-dictatorship.

So we find the pacifist zealously supporting boycotts, simply because he mistakes, as his kind always does, the means for the end; the Liberals backing up the pacifist, because they are congenitally unable to realize the consequences of their idealism when it smacks into reality; and the Comrades egging on both in preparation for that Holy War which is to redeem the Moscow Utopia. Where but in this marvelous America could you have such a set-up, with all "the best people" whooping for another attempt at race suicide *à la* 1914?

AMERICANA

ARIZONA

A RENOWNED center of Southwestern culture takes an unequivocal stand on the matter of professional football in colleges:

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Office of the Alumni President

Dear Alumni:

Have you heard that the University of Arizona will play Notre Dame in football at South Bend, Indiana, October 5, 1940; Southern Methodist University in Dallas on October 1, 1938, and Marquette in Tucson on November 19, 1938, and in Milwaukee on October 21, 1939? Did you know that Arizona has made more progress in athletics, particularly in football, the past few years than any college in America? . . .

The problem now confronting the University officials is to maintain the prestige which has been secured and to keep pace with their rivals. The football game with Notre Dame and others has more publicity value than can be measured in dollars and cents. Certainly this publicity will not be favorable if the Wildcats fail to make a reasonable showing, and here is where the alumni enter the picture.

What is needed is a substantial sum to establish scholarships for worthy students. This is the reason for my letter, and I hope your reaction is favorable. Any contribution you make will be acknowledged promptly and used to good advantage. . . .

AARON LEVY, '25,
President

CALIFORNIA

Two esteemed subscribers to the San Francisco *Chronicle* engage in an ideological debate in the letter columns of that paper:

Sir: I have this day stopped drinking coffee and shall continue this abstinence until Brazil changes her form of government. We have no room in the Americas for dictators of what ever tribe. This movement should be nipped in the bud to protect our democratic institutions.

ARTHUR C. THOMPSON

Sir: All hail to the coffee martyrs Thompson and Wright, whose letters recently appeared in the *Chronicle* stating that they have stopped drinking coffee in order to confound and destroy the dictator of Brazil. . . . Well, boys, I wish to announce that I have this day increased my daily consumption of coffee to three cups, in order to make up the loss caused by the apostasy of these two coffee martyrs. I think I can increase up to six cups daily, so I hope to hear further announcements from martyrs.

All hail to the dictator of Brazil! May his tribe increase!

JOHN CAMERON

PROFOUND medical discovery is passed on to the public by Yogi Baird T. Spalding, in the erudite pages of *Mind Magazine*:

I knew a doctor who had spent seven or eight years in India. When he returned to his home in America he challenged the County Medical Society. He asked them to present their test tubes containing the most virulent typhoid and other germs. He drank an amount sufficient to kill a young army and nothing came of it. I found out afterward that it was the conscious control of the thyroid.

INDIANA

New field of Christian endeavor is opened by an advertiser in the esteemed Indianapolis *Sunday Star*:

BELIEVING that sin should be handled at its source and that Satan, a former angel in heaven, was not beyond redemption, I prayed seventeen years that Jesus might abolish hell and accept Satan in conversion. This was accomplished in 1923. Hell is no more. I have as yet no local churches in America. Believers enroll in my general church, I contact by mail. You are invited to become a member. Address Aaron, the Peacemaker, the Clothespin Church, P. O. Box 1281, Indianapolis, Ind.

KENTUCKY

DEFINITE indication of advancing culture in the town of Harlan:

COMING

MARGIE GRAND THEATER

Matinee and Night

One of the greatest sensations of the 20th Century

EUNICE "WINSTED" JOHNS

The 9-year-old Child Bride and her Husband, Mr. Charlie Johns

Also the Bride's Father, Mr. Winsted

MASSACHUSETTS

REVOLUTION is narrowly averted on the streets of staid Pittsfield, according to the Associated Press:

Two customers at a film theater today demanded and received their money back. They went in, they said, under the impression that *The Great Garrick* was a baseball picture starring Lou Gehrig, the New York Yankees' slugger, instead of a costume picture starring Brian Aherne in the role of the famous British actor.

NEW YORK

THE Depression finally crosses the River Styx, according to an advertisement in the dignified *Herald-Tribune*:

Beautiful mausoleum. Several private crypts for sale; bargain, \$350 each; 15 minutes from New York.

STARTLING literary discovery is revealed in the up-to-the-minute pages of the *New Masses*:

The newspaper columnist, Ernest L. Meyer, said that when we wear silk we are wrapping ourselves in the blood and bones of bombed Chinese babies. This is probably the truest and most important figure of speech devised this year.

PENNSYLVANIA

SPECIAL attraction for knights of the road, as set forth in a folder of the Summit Hotel at Uniontown:

The John Gilbert Bridal Chamber. Note the eight-foot square bed of the "GREAT LOVER". Honeymooners are

requested to make advance reservations. The room will be rented daily to the winning couple of a lucky number drawn by means of a lottery held every morning, by the Management.

SOUTH DAKOTA

EVIDENCE of the Vanishing American Male is uncovered in the village of Bruce by the United Press:

Friends of Spencer Taken (that's his real name) believe he is the matrimonial catch of the decade. Taken has a complete hope chest, including six piecequilts, table and bed linens with crocheted borders, tatting, embroidering, doilied towels, cushions and buffet sets. He made them all himself.

TENNESSEE

THE United Dry Forces, Inc., resume their old battle with John Barleycorn, as disclosed by the Sumner County *News*:

The first task with which we are confronted is the coming Referendum election on our State law prohibiting the manufacture and sale of liquor. In this election there will be involved or at stake. But simply the question of whether you are in favor of sin or righteousness, purity or impurity, God or the devil. There is no middle ground, Christ said: "He that is not for me is against me." Alcohol in any form dealt in or used by anybody as a beverage, WITH or WITHOUT permission of law or license, is immoral, corrupt, devilish and destructive of body, mind, soul, character and everything else essential to individual life, home, and society. This is not a mere

speculative or prophetic statement but a fact too well established and witnessed to by an endless string of widows, orphans, wrecked homes, and drunkards' graves. Can you vote for a thing like that? You will answer that question at the polls, *and then answer at the Judgment.*

IN OTHER NEW UTOPIAS

ENGLAND

THE traditional British reserve gives way in a crisis, as chronicled by the sedate *Daily Dispatch*:

A few minutes after the King and Queen had left the parish church in St. Paul's Walden after morning service today, women were fighting in the aisle to sit in their places. They pushed each other, stumbled over hassocks, and struggled to sit in the cane-bottomed chairs. At times there were women both kneeling on the two red plush cushions and sitting on the Royal chairs.

THE dignity of British law is upheld fearlessly, according to the Manchester *Guardian*:

The Ramsey (Isle of Man) Stipendiary Magistrate held in a case before him yesterday that by joining with hotel customers in singing songs, Elizabeth Morris, landlady of the Victoria Hotel, Ramsey, had committed an offence. The magistrate, Mr. T. P. Melly, said that by singing herself the defendant had abandoned the neutral attitude which would have kept her within the law. As it was she had provided an entertainment in the hotel when not so licensed, and he fined her 10s.

THE STATE OF THE UNION

BY ALBERT JAY NOCK

Stealing Tammany's Stuff

THE recent election in New York City, which returned Mr. LaGuardia in triumph to the City Hall, was in some ways an amusing affair. To a good-humored person who knows what to expect from elections and does not take them too seriously, a contest between an Italian and an Irishman, a Wop and a Harp, for the mayoralty of an American city, the Yank metropolis, was reminiscent of the later years of the Roman Empire. At that time Rome had about run out of blooded stock. The noble Roman had pretty well gone out of commission; his relics, if any existed, had been swamped into obscurity by the mass of miscellaneous riff-raff which made up the Roman population, and were leading an exiguous and encysted life, like flies in amber. Public affairs promptly reflected this change of conditions. There were no more Catos in action, no more Julii and Augusti at the head of the Empire. Instead, all sorts of enterprising outlanders from anywhere and nowhere began to horn in and con-

tend for the emperors. Rome got its emperors from the Province, from Spain, even once in a while taking on a barbarian hailing from Dacia or some other uncivilized region. The name of Odoacer, for example, coming in succession to names like Tiberius, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, must have sounded as strange to the Roman ear as the name of LaGuardia sounds to the American ear when coming in succession to names like Mitchell, Low, Gaynor, Strong. For a considerable time, in short, the affairs of Rome were administered by anybody and everybody except Romans.

There may be a moral in all this, if anyone has a mind to look for it. One might remark the coincidence, for whatever value one chooses to attach to it, that the heyday of the outlander was a petering-out period for Rome. The Empire was no more than a cadaver when the foreign adventurer sunk his fangs in it. It really died with the Antonines; after that, like the Irishman's squirming snake, "it

was dead, but it wasn't sensible in it yet". The remains of its civilization passed over to the Province and took root there, while the glory of Rome itself faded out of life and into history.

But I shall leave these interesting matters connected with the death of Rome for the reader to ruminate upon as he sees fit, while I go on to speak about matters connected with the reported death of Tammany Hall. The morning after election day the newspapers had it that Tammany at last was dead, and that all good people might therefore duly rejoice. Mr. LaGuardia's re-election had not merely protracted one of Tammany's recurrent spells of "taking the count". No, this time the Tiger was dead for good and all, beyond any hope of resuscitation and recovery. Righteousness and civic virtue had prevailed, morality had triumphed, the sword of the Lord and of Gideon had done its noble work, and henceforth the just might rejoice in a chemically-pure administration of the city's affairs.

All this was highly exhilarating; it read well. Nevertheless, some of it seemed to me to be open to question. In the first place, I am not so sure that the Tiger is dead. He looks dead, acts dead, and I think he is dead, but I am not sure. I

know so much about the methods which have kept Tammany to the front all these years as a going concern, and I have so much respect for the efficacy of those methods, that I am not helping to kick the Tiger around until I get more evidence than I have at present that he is as dead as he looks.

Time, however, will settle that. What I am quite sure of at the moment is that if the Tiger be actually dead and not merely going through the motions, it was no onslaught of righteousness, morality, and civic virtue that killed him; not by any means. The death of Tammany, if, when, and as, is due to the incorporation of Greater New York, years ago. Tammany's activities have always been mostly confined to Manhattan and the bridgehead regions of Brooklyn, and in the days when the vote in the outlying boroughs was negligible, that was all well enough. But with the development of the Bronx, Queens, Richmond, and the pushing-out of Brooklynite subway commuters — God pity them! — into the regions of Flatbush and beyond, Manhattan can no longer be counted on to swing the city's vote. It is an open question whether Tammany will be able to reorganize itself on the lines of the great new national policy of complete

centralization, and thus overcome this handicap. If it cannot, or does not, I think we may safely say that the Tiger is dead; otherwise I am not at all sure that we may say that. There is no doubt, however, that it was no great accession of civic virtue which has temporarily, at least, laid him low, but the diligent marshaling of voting-power in districts beyond the effective range of Tammany's operation.

Tammany's aims and methods are so well known that they need no more than a word or two by way of showing their extreme simplicity. Tammany Hall wanted control of the city's government for what there was in it. Political power and prestige never interested Tammany much; megalomaniacs were at a big discount in the Hall. Its aim was prosaic. Politics was its business, and the object of business is to drag down the stuff. To its everlasting credit, Tammany never made any bones about this; as Richard Croker put it, Tammany worked for its own pocket all the time, "like everybody else", and was never ashamed to say so; and it regarded the fuzzy ideals and fuzzier pretensions of reformers, uplifters, and "sociologists" with calm and contemptuous superiority.

Control of the city's government

meant getting votes; and here Tammany was as simple and direct in its method as in its aim. It got votes by looking after its people, especially its poorer people, not only around election-time, but all the time, every day in the year. It imported into its method that something which our Uplifters are so fond of calling "the human touch"; something which cannot be learned by taking courses in sociology. Putting one of Mr. Hopkins' best assorted social workers up against a Tammany Irish saloonkeeper in a case requiring the human touch would be like putting an eighth-grade schoolboy up against Albert Einstein in a problem involving the differential calculus. There was very little humbug about it, either, for Tammany's working personnel came largely from that quick-witted and sentimental race which seems to be born with a deep understanding of human sorrows and a ready sympathy for them. When Tim Doyle got hurt and was put out of work for a month, Tammany did not send around a "trained investigator" with a pocketful of index-cards. No, the bartender on the corner looked in and said, "I've heerd iv y'er trouble, Mrs. Doyle. Tell me, was Tim much hurted? He was? Dear, dear, now, but

that's too bad. It's hard f'r ye, Mrs. Doyle, so it is. I'll see if somethin' can't be done." Then he passed the word to the ward-boss, who passed it to the district leader, who saw to it that something was done, and done at once.

Taking care of its people costs money, and Tammany got its money in the same way that Mr. Roosevelt's machine or any other political machine gets its money — by holding up the public. In all such cases the public pays through the nose for its own exploitation. Under Tammany's régime the "good" people of New York, whoever those are, had periodical spells of being tremendously worked up about this disgrace, and once in a while they would muster strength enough to elect a "Reform" administration which put the Tiger on short rations for a year or two but presently petered out, usually through pretentious incompetence. The history of these administrations abundantly justified Rémy de Gourmont's observation that "when morality triumphs, very filthy things take place".

II

In 1932 an unusual combination of circumstances presented the interesting possibility of taking over

Tammany's methods bodily and applying them to the nation at large; and as usual, the right man was on hand for the job. A man of no traditions, no intelligence, no convictions, no habits, precisely like Tweed, Croker, Murphy, he was gifted only with the low sagacity which unerringly perceives such chances, and with the stubborn audacity which instantly fastens on them. The result of his endeavors, as far as a disinterested observer can see, shows no essential difference between Tammany's aims and methods and those of the New Deal. Tammany aimed at political control, to be exercised in the furtherance of its own purposes; so does the New Deal. Tammany attained its aim by building up an unbeatable political machine; so did the New Deal. Tammany built its machine, and kept it running, by subsidizing a proletarian vote; so did the New Deal. Tammany paid for this subsidizing with money filched from the public; so did the New Deal — Mr. Morgenthau is even now scraping the bottom of the Treasury. The only difference one can see is a superficial one. Mr. Roosevelt's fancy is for political power and prestige rather than money, whereas Tweed, John Kelly, Croker, Murphy, cared not

a button for power and prestige except as they could be converted into terms of cash. In a word, whereas the sachem of Tammany worked for his own pocket all the time, Mr. Roosevelt worked for his own megalomania all the time; that is the only difference.

Now, the most interesting thing brought to light by the New York election is that most of the "good" people who are so scandalized by the iniquities of Tammany, seem to be strong for the New Deal. It is hard for a logical mind to understand this. Mr. LaGuardia is a good New Dealer — whether by force of conviction or of expediency makes no difference — and may be trusted to jog along comfortably with it. Therefore, if political principle plays any part in determining a New Yorker's vote, it would seem that one might as well have tossed up a cent for the choice between Mr. Mahoney and Mr. LaGuardia. If sentiment determines it, one would suppose that a straightforward person, disgusted by the New Deal's nauseous pretensions, would

vote for the blunt forthrightness of Tammany, world without end, in the spirit of Colonel Asa Bird Gardiner's famous saying, "To hell with Reform!" Even if voting be determined on a lower plane, it is doubtful, very doubtful indeed, whether the exactions of Tammany at its worst could possibly run to more money than those of the New Deal, or even match them.

So the behavior of the "good" people, at least such of them as fall into the foregoing category, is a puzzle which I shall have to leave to my readers, for it is an impenetrable mystery to me. Their view seems to be that the principles and practices of Tammany, which are so heinous in New York, somehow become thoroughly moralized and sanctified by the mere process of extension over a country-wide area. I do not understand this view. Perhaps my readers may find some sort of lunatic consistency somewhere in it, so I have pleasure in offering it to them as an interesting problem in human conduct.





POETRY

THE WALL

By EVA BYRON

BETWEEN my heart and its desire
Mind built a wall,
Gathering from the field of reason
Great stones and small,
Laying them precisely.
Mind does such things so nicely.

Exactly when you touched the wall
Heart could not swear;
Mind had other plans that day
And was not even there.
Neither saw it falling, neither heard a sound —
But suddenly the stones lay strewn upon the ground.

NEVER DENY A MOUNTAIN

By HOWARD MCKINLEY CORNING

NEVER deny a mountain: it will fall
Over your stateliest pace,
It will bow you down by the tall
Shadow upon your face.

Denial will make you little, who should be great.
You will go lame to find
That lifted enormous weight
Plunging against your mind.

Days will come too early, nights too slow.
You will not see the length
Of earth beneath you for the sun's glow
On that granite strength.

Never deny a mountain: it is your power.
It is yourself unafraid
In that shaken importunate hour
When the earth's aid

Crumbles like ancient leaves, when the hands
Let go the beautiful flame;
And you cry to the mountain and the worldless lands
To speak your name.

IN FLOOD AND DEARTH

(Newspaper item: People went to church in rowboats. . . .)

BY SARA HENDERSON HAY

SUCH hath His kindness been to me
That I His name could bless,
And fall upon a bended knee
In simple selfishness,

But that I see in flood and dearth
How harsh His hand doth lie
Throughout the length and breadth of earth
On better folk than I.

A taint of Reason in the skull
It is a perilous thing
For such good faith as any fool
Might keep for comforting.

THE AMERICAN MERCURY

For if in truth His purposed power
Hath sent the storm abroad,
Then am I humbled most before
Man's charity to God!

Oh, it must shame Him to His face,
If out of Heaven He notes
The feeble, gasping squeak of praise
From the surviving throats.

BEAN POLES

BY FRED LAPE

I stuck twelve saplings in the garden.
They might have been trees if I had let them.
I was the god who made them harden
Leafless and withered where I set them.

Awkward and angled, dead leaves on their tips,
Facing me there, they made me wonder
If man is a useful god who clips
Life when he will for his own plunder.

But the beans grew up, the bean vines flourished.
They coiled around the drying bark.
They covered it over with leaves, they nourished
Their tendrils over the dead tips' mark.

And who shall say that a withered sapling
Holding the sweet scented flowers of the bean
Is not as good with coiled vines grappling
Its length, as a tree in its own green?

THE LIBRARY

*The Genius of Audubon*¹

BY JOHN W. THOMASON, JR.

IT APPEARS that, in April of 1785, at Aux Cayes in Santo Domingo — now the progressive Republic of Haiti, then a rich colony of France — a creole woman, one Mlle. Rabin, bore a fine son to Captain Jean Audubon, a seafaring man who was in and out of the Royal, and later the Republican Navy, and did a deal of successful colonial trading. Nine years later, at Nantes, Captain Audubon executed papers of adoption on — it is assumed — this boy, called Fougère, whose mother was identified in the instrument as “having lived in America”. Elsewhere he is styled La Forêt, and his wife, most appropriately, called him La Forêt always. Only one legal document of his early years refers to him as Audubon: he himself, when come of age, signed his name Jean Jacques la Forêt Audubon, and anglicized it finally to John James Audubon, by which name he is known today. In all respects a fellow of curious

and retentive mind, it may be that his first memories were of the bright hot land where he was born, between the blue sea and the purple mountains, with its flowering vines and its brilliant darting birds. But he never said so. Beyond the facts above, nothing is known of his beginnings: there is a mystery about his origins, which he did nothing to discourage: indeed, in the years of his fame, it was whispered: There is the Lost Dauphin, no less! And his latest biographer, the painstaking Miss Constance Rourke, presents a sort of case for such romantic assumptions. She does him less than justice: a Bourbon, now. . . .

Captain Audubon was a man of substance about the turn of the century, with farm lands in France, and in Pennsylvania, and a business in Philadelphia, and interests in New Orleans. He intended the boy for the Navy, and sent him to the Rochefort training school, but

¹ *The Birds of North America*, by John James Audubon. \$12.50. Macmillan.

it was plain he had no inclination that way: he was always running off to the country; and showed a talent for drawing, and a pretty aptitude for music, and none whatever for the sea. In the outcome, he took drawing lessons from David, the uninspired, meritorious classicist much admired in Revolutionary France; and instruction on the violin, the flute, and the flageolet; and no systematic education whatever. About the time he was twenty, the Captain thought best to get him out of France, where the First Consul Bonaparte was conscripting right and left for military projects, and he was shipped off to Philadelphia and the Audubon farm called Mill Grove, on the Perkiomen. To abridge matters, he developed great proficiency in the field sports of the region, discovering birds of more variety and interest than the green woodpeckers, the rooks, the larks, and the daws of the French farm; he learned of ornithology from a Doctor d'Orbigny, and read the works of Buffon, and kept up his drawing. A strong, active fellow, with a salient nose, piercing blue eyes, and long hair, he was admired for his proficiency in skating and dancing, and for his other talents also, and he married the girl Lucy Bakewell, daughter of the Bakewells of Fat-

lands, farm adjacent to Mill Grove. She was a sweet, patient woman of English Quaker stock, much enduring, and the stabilizing influence in his life thereafter. It was 1808: Captain Audubon's affairs were not prosperous, and the young man immediately mismanaged and lost the Philadelphia interests confided to him. With Lucy he set out hopefully for the West, traveling by way of Harrisburg in a Conestoga wagon, to set up a business on the frontier. He opened a store in Louisville that year, general merchandise and so forth, and became acquainted with Uncle Dan'l Boone, who traded in Louisville, and with William Clark, the map-maker of the Lewis and Clark expedition, who lived in the hills across the river. And there also turned up, with the emigrant stream flowing westward from the old States, the sour Scotch naturalist, Alexander Wilson, soliciting subscriptions for a book on birds he was preparing: a virgin subject in the New World. Afterwards, Wilson would be asserting that Audubon stole his thunder.

It may be that these three, the gaunt restless old hunter, the restless young man who had measured the breadth of the continent and looked on the Pacific Ocean, and the unattractive ornithologist with

stubborn unfacile talents, opened horizons for Audubon, beyond the Louisville emporiums. There was a great new land around him, a land of many waters and shadowed with wings: and the community early recognized in him one of those lovable loafers who had rather go fishing, or run out to shoot some birds, than sell a bill of goods for cash money. What his in-laws thought of him, as his material prospects evaporated, is painful to imagine. The details are tiresomely set down, how eventually he was in jail for debt and won his freedom by the bankruptcy route: and how his creditors left him nothing but his dog and his gun, his fiddle and his portfolios. Lucy, with a family to provide for, took employment as a governess, and Audubon began his wanderings. He had, perhaps for the first time in his life, a purpose: to identify, study, and set on paper North American birds. It was a vast aspiration.

He floated down the Mississippi on a keel boat: New Orleans knew him, and the Florida savannahs, and the low countries in the Carolinas, and the coasts of Labrador. He painted portraits, not very good ones, for his board and lodging, and instructed planters' daughters in drawing and music, to purchase his materials. Faithful and ener-

getic, Lucy kept his growing family together, some times accompanying him and sometimes not, and they got along. Much sympathy has been wasted on his toils in those years: how rats in a frontier cabin destroyed one lot of drawings, and how a leaky roof failed to protect another, and how his eyes ached from close work by candlelight: but in fact, he was doing what he wanted to do and doing it magnificently, and he knew it. Presently he had an accumulation of some two hundred portraits of birds, done from the life, the beginnings of a project impressive enough to command support, and certainly to need it. He returned East to finance what he intended.

He must have been an excellent salesman and a fine showman. In Philadelphia and New York he raised enough money to cross to Europe, where the patrons of art and science were reputed to be more open-handed, and where, also, there were competent engravers. He exhibited in Edinburgh, winning the friendship of Christopher North, and the admiration of the venerated Sir Walter Scott. He was a sensation in London, swanking through the drawing-rooms in the beaded buckskins of the Western Country, his long hair anointed with bear grease:

George IV and the Duke of Clarence were among his subscribers. In Paris he was cordially received, but he won only fourteen subscriptions from the thrifty people of his father. Altogether, he took 279 subscriptions for his projected work on the birds of North America, at guineas 182/14s the set, or about one thousand American dollars in all. It was to be issued in four parts. Each part was to be paid for as it was issued, the first instalment in advance. I know of no more successful book-salesmanship on record; and there were 161 subscribers who remained to the end. That is important money.

He returned to America and did his work: it took eleven years, from 1827 to 1838.

Wild birds have interested artists always. They did them excellently well in Egypt of the Eighteenth Dynasty: the gray-lag geese, the little hawks, and the quail of those unknown draftsmen are fresh and lively today. The Imperial Museum that used to be in Peking (where is it now?) displayed paintings on silk, by Ming and early Manchu artists, which are perhaps the finest bird paintings in the world, if indeed they still exist: falcons and peacocks and water-fowl whose eyes follow you around

the room. But the Western representations of wild life, before Audubon, do not command admiration. There are a few Dutch pieces, of swans and the like, that convince, but the French and Italian schools were not much concerned in such things, and the English preferred their game dead and hanging: their living subjects have the appearance of being studied from poorly-stuffed specimens, and the sugary formal sweetness of Christmas cards. Audubon made birds exciting.

He observed them in their natural habitat, with patience and exact vision: he learned the anatomy of a bird, which is as important in its place as human anatomy; the portrait painter Healy said Audubon's eyes were the most piercing eyes he ever saw — "real eagle's eyes". He shot his specimen, and set it with long pins against a board, in an attitude he had seen, and worked from that, and when he was finished, the thing on paper lived. It may be that he had from David a purity and force of line, but the action that animated his figures cannot be taught. Nor did he, in art, forget or slur the cold exactions of science. His compositions are built up and balanced in fluent harmony of line and mass, but the feather textures and pat-

terns are set forth with meticulous detail, and the subjects are presented in attitudes that show the distinctive markings and characteristic movements. Sometimes this calls for four of a species to a plate: thus one willet — fine large shore bird — preens himself, at rest, displaying the intricate design of his back feathers: another lifts his wings to exhibit the striking white patch that twinkles when a willet flies, and a third offers his streaked breast. After that picture, when you see a willet you will know him.

The same completeness is followed in the markings of male and female, and in the variables of color phases: there is a grey marsh hawk and a reddish marsh hawk, sometimes occurring together on the same range; and Audubon's marsh hawk plate affords both phases, male, female, and young. And with all, he was collecting the material which he later wrote into his *Ornithological Biography* (with MacGillivray) which is still a standard authority on American birds.

He did not escape criticism. The academicians were offended by the unconfined vitality and informality of his birds: they felt that a bird should be a gentle, decorative creature, lending charm to a composed scene. But Audubon's birds are immensely intent on the business of

living: they fight each other, and defend their nests from reptiles; they dart swiftly, and make love; they pursue insects and tear their prey; they dress their feathers. They are all doing something. Even the herons, motionless in the shallows, have the immobility of a coiled spring.

The naturalists were offended. This man's scientific background is not impressive, they said, and besides, birds take no such attitudes. Alexander Wilson — and Wilson's publishers, for his prosaic laborious book was coming out — were offended, and actively censorious: they said Audubon was a nature faker. And some delicate people were made ill by the duck hawks, male and female, who, on Plate 16, tear with dripping beaks into a gadwall and a drake green-winged teal; admittedly a feeding hawk is not a dainty sight.

Yet Audubon was following the oldest and the most important rule of art: A picture must tell a story. And sober gentlemen and ladies who never knew, or wanted to know, one bird from another, understood the stories his pictures told, and delighted in them. He was most fortunate in his engravers, the gifted Havells of London. The great folios came along, printed from aqua-tint engravings

on double elephant folio Whatman paper, $39\frac{1}{2}$ by $26\frac{1}{2}$ inches, 200 sets of 435 plates in all. They were hand-colored, and the originals are superb. The unusual size permitted every bird to be presented as large as life, and Audubon met ingeniously the problems set him by such tall fellows as the Sand Hill Crane, the Trumpeter Swan, and the Great Blue Heron. Long before the task was completed, he was famous, and enjoyed his fame, and his latter circumstances were as easy as they ever could be with a man of his lavish temperament. He projected a kindred work, *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*, to be accomplished on the same heroic scale, and worked at it through the '40's, but it was not completed. His animal plates are almost unknown and very rare. They are not as successful as the birds: but they are still Audubon, and he was better at such things than any man who ever lived. He died in 1851, in his home on the Hudson River. In all he did he was a picturesque, compelling figure and the mark he set endures. His mind was vigorous and many-sided, and his journals of his travels are important records of the American frontier a century ago. He wrote with much of the freshness and dramatic instinct that in-

formed his drawing. In all things, he was one of the most vivid individuals in a vivid and exciting age.

Some libraries and a few individuals own complete sets of the original folios, and some have been broken up and sold. You see them in places of honor here and there. The game birds, the great birds of prey, and such pieces as the Mockingbirds and Rattlesnake, command impressive prices, appreciating as time goes on. It is something to own an Audubon.

Messrs. Macmillan have brought out a set of reproductions from the folios, and sixty-five later plates of Western birds, rather inferior, 500 plates in all, and have made on the whole a very beautiful book of them. The reproductions are about ten inches by fourteen, not too large to handle, but large enough to do justice to the originals. One dislikes to be captious about such a meritorious undertaking, but at the present excellent state of color-process in this country, it is hard to see why some of the plates have been badly botched, both in color and in line. The Purple Grackles on Plate 7, the Bufflehead Ducks on Plate 325, and the swallows on Plate 385 are striking birds with iridescent plumage, and Audubon drew them so, but these reproductions are dull and soft. In

the Woodcock Plate, and that of the young Bald Eagle, something seems to have slipped, for the lines are smeared. But such mishaps are not the rule. The handsome Wild Turkey gobbler on Plate 1, the adult Bald Eagle with his catfish, the terrified covey of quail on which a hawk is swooping, indeed, most of the water fowl and the game plates, lose almost nothing, beyond size. There is an understanding introduction by William Vogt, who wrote, also, the brief accompanying texts which give the ranges, habitats, and characteristics of the subjects. There is appended a note on the original plates, which might well be more comprehensive; and the transcript of the legends set by Audubon himself upon the originals is of interest and value.

The book carries a sure appeal

to any person who has a feeling for life and beauty in form and color: and if you ever went, yourself, into the fields and the woods and the marshes where wild things live, it will be an endless delight to you. With entire propriety Mr. Vogt concludes: "Few of the men who wrested its virgin fruits from this continent dealt so fairly with it as Audubon. He compounded its riches to his own benefit; but, unlike most pioneers of the period, he contributed far more than he took away. Others fouled the rivers, destroyed the soil, pillaged the forests, and slaughtered the wild creatures. Audubon, loving that rich land, as few men have loved it, before or since, captured within his books, and saved for us who must painfully correct our ancestors' mistakes, the essence of America that was."



THE OPEN FORUM

ENGLAND TALKS BACK.

SIR: May I, as an Englishman who has followed closely American politics for some years past, comment on the attitude of your magazine towards Great Britain. Your ideas, or your contributors' ideas of British foreign policy, are aptly expressed by the oft-recurring phrase: "The British Empire will fight to the last American." Now, no Briton with the slightest knowledge of the U.S.A. expects America to fight for anything but those things from which your more powerful men hope to gain some financial benefit. All your wars have had this motive in the forefront, and human ideals can be left to look after themselves, as far as the "great Western Democracy" is concerned. No sane man expects anything else from a country in which nothing has any value apart from its price in hard cash—a country in which all things, senators, votes, judges, juries, female flesh and what passes for justice, are bought and sold in what is practically an open market. Of course, leading British politicians like Neville Chamberlain and Anthony Eden occasionally make high-sounding speeches about "the two great English-speaking democracies", but surely you realize that this is just a form of international politeness, and means nothing more than a polite "Good Morning" to a pawnbroker with whom one may have to do business some day.

Any faint illusions we in Great Britain may have had about American action were dispelled by your part in the European War of 1914–1918. Having been unable, by force of geographical circumstances, to lend money to and make exorbitant profits out of other than the Allied combatants, America had a vague fear, sometime in 1917, that

the horse she was perforce backing might not win after all, and declared war in the Allied interest, not to "save democracy" but to save invested dollars. And the part she played in the war was what might have been expected. A muddy spate of ballyhoo, loud boasting, cheap self-advertisement, and frenzied profit-snatching, but not too much practical help. There were very few more Americans in the fighting areas a year after your declaration of war than there had been a year before it. And this in spite of the fact that the American Government, knowing its people, could not depend on voluntary recruiting to reinforce its fighting services, but enacted a form of conscription on the first day of its entry into the war.

No, Great Britain knows that the only thing that would make America fight would be a "cut" of suitable dimensions. The justice or otherwise of the cause would not matter in the least, and "cuts" are increasingly difficult to provide in modern warfare. Great Britain knows, and is not particularly upset about knowing, that she can depend on herself alone, as she always has done.

G. SMITH

Bermuda.

SIR: Your magazine is a Bible of mine. I wish I could do something to assist your campaign against the nastier forms of political tomfoolery, and against the rabble-rousing opinions and propaganda of those who would make us slaves of the State under the guise of presenting us with Utopia on a platter. Forgive me therefore if I descend to criticism of Mr. Nock's "New Dose of British Propaganda" and

your Editorial in the December issue. We, the British, would like your co-operation in solving world problems, and you are certainly entitled to your opinion as to whether we should get it or not, but please do not stoop to the methods of the politicians you so dislike in endeavoring to influence public opinion, which I believe you also distrust. You would probably admit that you would act very much like we do if our positions were reversed.

We do not bomb Indian villages. We bomb Afridis after serving due notice that bombing will commence unless the border raids on innocent civilians cease. It is of course unfair that the Border Tribes haven't any airplanes, but they couldn't carry off much plunder with them anyhow, and the villagers do have time to get out of the way. I'm not very well up on this border-policing business and I'm afraid you aren't either. Our methods in Palestine may be open to criticism, but you must admit that considerable provocation has been offered and we are at least trying to prevent the extermination of one people by another. The Jews of course may be able to protect themselves and the Arabs might be peaceable if we left Palestine alone, but they might not. Mr. Mussolini should be able to answer that one.

In the course of a checkered career we have committed many errors and have made some pretty bloody scars on the face of the earth, but that is only saying that we are much the same as anyone else. We had hoped, though, that we were improving, and the fact that you point out we are not, is a bit of a blow. In justice, might I remind you that very little of the so called "Empire" is left. In that we have made an advance that no other people have ever done without a revolution. Some peoples do prefer British domination to any other, as I think Mr. Vincent Sheean pointed out some time ago in the *Saturday Evening Post* in a very able article on Egypt. Several African tribes have stated definitely that they like us. We probably do not behave

very well during a war when we blockade the German civilian, but as you point out, no one does behave very well in a war. Great Britain is very anxious to keep the sea lanes open and I think you will have to allow that in this she is not at all unfriendly towards anyone in particular. During the period of free trade, English colonial possessions could hardly be called a disadvantage to any other nation for they had the same opportunities in England and her colonies to obtain raw materials as any British business. I don't expect you to agree with me when I say that tariffs are one of the most important causes of friction between nations because they distinctly prevent the "Have-Nots" from obtaining the things that they could get by ordinary trade. Unfortunately, a letter is not the place to carry on a discussion that would fill a book and I must apologize for making this as long as it is.

I love your literary fulminations, but keep the powder dry so they don't fizzle.

ERIC MAKOVSKI

*Hollyburn, B. C.
Canada.*



FARLEY'S NEW DEAL

SIR: Your recent article in which you present Big Jim Farley as the next Democratic candidate for President was indeed refreshing — and with the gala display of data, you can hardly miss your guess. The New Deal has now reached well into its fifth year, and if inconsistency is a jewel, the whole shebang must be a precious ornament. To dwell at length on the illogical manipulations of the present ordeal would require volumes. Hence, a few outstanding examples.

The Federal Government is spending thousands daily to stock the entire nation with agricultural schools in which the boys learn how to make two grains of corn grow where one once grew and two drops of milk flow where one once flew. And then the government pays them not to grow it, and kills the cows. All the farmer needs to

know under the present régime is the "Three R's" so he can read the government blanks sent him, cut down his acreage, and sign on the dotted line for his check.

The New Deal is under the disguise of pulling us out of a panic. It is done by soaking big business and little business, and all in between. The big foot even crushes down on the neck of the small-town merchant. The government taxes him like hell, and then competes him out of business with a commissary that hands out the necessities of the More Abundant Life, free of charge.

Uncle Sam is "behind the banks," we are told. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation protects the depositor when the banks pay the proper premiums. A fee must be charged on out-of-town checks to pay the bill of fare. And at the same time, the government gives the banks a run on competition by peddling out cheap loans to everybody for everything, from the construction of an outdoor toilet to making a gourd crop. The only class of people, besides the politicians, who feast off the prevailing system is that of the lazy, shiftless, slothful, sluggish, half-baked citizenship who make their lucrative pastime that of increasing the nation's posterity.

Now, back to Jim Farley. Jim stands out as a marvelous prognosticator of things nationally political. But I fail to see the mystery in his calculations when that class of people is armed with the power of suffrage and the convenience of locomotion to the polls. Jim just has 'em counted out ahead of schedule. He knows how many there are, and it's no gamble as to how they will vote.

Anybody with one eye, half sense, and a cork leg could figure it out, provided he has the statistics, a sharp pencil, and plenty of paper. And if you can find enough hookworm medicine to keep 'em alive from one election to the next, Roosevelt can be elected President for a thousand years.

KARR SHANNON, *Editor*

Melbourne Times

*Melbourne,
Arkansas.*

CONCERNING CATS

SIR: "Our Enemy, the Cat" was, of course, interesting and well-written; but the writer just does not stick to facts entirely. While it is unquestionably true that cats will "go native" more easily and completely than any other domestic animal — and no doubt equally true that they are not capable of any real affection or loyalty such as we know in the dog — still they are not always the unadulterated savages he pictures.

Personally, I don't like cats, and the feeling seems to be quite mutual. But I have known some who showed a definite sense of humor — which surely removes them some distance from the wild feline. And some who indicated strict adherence to a code of ethics and etiquette in their relations with a dog, often putting up with a great deal of petty tyrannizing while knowing well enough they could have done an awful job on him at any time.

Then there are certain people who just naturally — if quite inexplicably — attract cats; certainly for something more than the "contour of their lap." Several I've known are leary of stopping to speak to a cat in the street, knowing that said feline will almost invariably follow them home and decide to park there. One girl of my acquaintance — herself strongly suggestive of a cat, *sans* the cruel emotional set-up — worked for some years in a ground-floor office and it seemed every tom and tabby in the neighborhood sneaked in and lay down beside her chair. She never gave them a hand-out and apparently they never looked for any; simply derived some sort of pleasure — psychic perhaps — from her immediate proximity.

There are other things Mr. Devoe might explain. For instance, the friendly playfulness (not mere battle practice) of the domestic cheetah of India, which in its wild state is the most utterly hard-boiled of cats, with the possible exception of the famous black panthers. Or the well-authenticated stories of South American pumas coming to park under a sleeping man's hammock and, on

some known occasions, appearing from the bush to defend a man against the larger and heavier tiger or jaguar. Even in our own West, the cougars — probably descendants of puma emigres from below the Rio — are notoriously inoffensive to humans, a fact often attributed to the animal's cowardice, though that is a long way from the truth. Legend has it that the pumas were once domestic animals of the now-vanished people of Central and northern South America. This may account for their peculiar feeling toward us — but if so they have never succeeded in entirely reverting to the old state. For good or ill, uplifting or degenerative, something of the human contact has rubbed off.

FRANK W. RYAN

*Brookline,
Massachusetts.*

SIR: Mr. Alan Devoe's study of the cat contains two fundamental misconceptions. He seems to imply that the perfectly true qualities he ascribes to the cat should lessen them in the esteem of mankind. And he ignores the whole matter of individualism in cats.

It has been my privilege to enjoy the friendship of a succession of cats. I have valued these associations as highly as those with fellow human beings, and for the same reasons. They are based on mutual respect and understanding. Both my cat and my human friends expect me to contribute something to the relationship. Both require of me a decent respect for their reticences and a tacit admission of their integrity as individuals. Unless I treat them with fairness and consideration I shall lose their society, and I should. No human being would permit me to dictate his every movement in accordance with my whim. But I do not regard him as my enemy for that reason, as Mr. Devoe so strangely expects me to regard the cat.

Because the cat is a self-respecting, independent, strongly individualistic creature — traits, I am sure, which Mr. Devoe re-

gards as highly admirable in man — it does not follow that he is incapable of genuine affection, any more than is a man or woman of similar characteristics.

Nor is it safe to generalize too broadly about cats in other respects. Not all of them seek solitude in the crisis of their lives. Many of them are undemonstrative, just as many people are. One cat who shared my roof was markedly reserved. She would tolerate petting from no one but me, and that rarely. In all the normal business of everyday life she was self-sufficient.

More piffle has been written about cats than about any other living creature. They are mysterious beasts, beyond the comprehension of earth-bound humanity. They are in touch with the occult. They commune with forces outside our ken. What unmitigated nonsense!

They are cats. That is all, just cats. They are not dogs, and that one simple truth is the basis for all the ridiculous canards which have been written about them through immemorial years. A dog will be a slave; a cat will not. The natures which demand that their vanity be fed by slavish adoration require cats to be dogs. A dog would do his best to be a cat if it was wanted of him. No cat would consent to be other than a cat, nor will he make the slightest effort toward doghood.

ELIZABETH HUGHES

*Tulsa,
Oklahoma.*



ORCHID DEPARTMENT

SIR: I am somewhat puzzled at your publication. As to "Farley for President!" I can second the motion. But your article, "Propaganda from the White House", is an insult to those who think for themselves. Your easy way of using the word propaganda convinces me you are a Catholic. That is all right with me. There are good people among the Catholics as well as other Christian denominational sects and sex.

The information furnished by the Gov-

ernment is a wonderful help to those interested in different industries. As for myself, I receive articles of inestimable value to my profession and know that most of the industries are benefited by this public information which you call propaganda. Wisdom is digested knowledge. Mr. Carroll is suffering from indigestion.

R. B. TODD

*Los Angeles,
California.*

SIR: I have just finished reading the December number of your magazine and I am sick with sadness. All of my days I have been a Liberal — Universalist-Unitarian — and I have tried to "see good in everything", but this number of your magazine is one miserable mixture of doubt, cynicism, and despair. To believe what it says one would be convinced that the very worst is yet to come and that would be soon.

REV. B. G. CARPENTER

*Peoria,
Illinois.*

SIR: Along in the early Nineteen Twenties, I used to be a rather constant reader of THE MERCURY. It was then under the editorship of H. L. Mencken at a time when his mentality was vivid and alert. During those days, I obtained not a little pleasure and much good information from its pages. However, when the management and editorship changed, I gradually ceased reading it.

For sometime I have been receiving stereotyped invitations to subscribe to THE MERCURY and just to see what the old magazine was like, I purchased a newsstand copy. After reading four articles in the December number I arrived at the decided conviction that the magazine had deteriorated abominably. There is not a constructive thought in the whole magazine. Its chief aim seems to be that of "knocking" every constructive effort to inculcate a bit of sense into a rather sick economic system. In Russia there is a gov-

ernment which is at least trying to better the living conditions of the people as a whole. It is agreed by not a few well-read people that this government is making advances along economic and cultural lines which bid fare to bring about the conditions necessary for a good life. And THE MERCURY hands its readers an article like "The Good Life In Moscow". Our President is endeavoring to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth in these United States. He has made, and doubtless will make, many mistakes. He would hardly be human if he didn't. Nevertheless his endeavors to bring a more full life to all the inhabitants of this nation is worthy of sympathetic understanding. THE MERCURY gives us an article like "Ten Forgotten Men". Ten little men who are absolutely taxed to death for the benefit of incompetents, as the article puts it. Among these incompetents are millions who did the actual work of building the machinery and power which is now able to produce enough wealth to put every man and woman in the land in comfortable circumstances, if we had a sane method of wealth distribution. These millions are now on relief because they were not paid enough for their labor to enable them to buy back their share of the wealth they produced. The result was the big bust in 1929, which is still far from being remedied.

If you desire to have THE MERCURY circulate among those who, I believe, think when they read, I would suggest that you give a thought to the changed conditions in a changing world.

I. C. FRENDBERG

*Bismarck,
North Dakota.*

SIR: After reading the three criticisms in Albert Jay Nock's fan mail, I am wondering, "Why the animus?" I may have been fooled, but since I first discovered him, I have marveled at his uncanny ability at giving out the word with the bark on it. Among such writings I can suggest to his

distressed critics his book, *Our Enemy, the State*. It should afford pleasure to anyone not a slick-ear Democrat.

But possibly my judgment may be warped, for after seven years of wading through Adam Smith, David Hume, John MacKinnon Robertson, *et al.*, chasing this elusive thing known as economics, I eventually found myself alongside of Nock baying up the tree that Henry George pointed out more than fifty years ago. That may have prejudiced me in his favor as it seemed to prove he was just as smart as I. But off the record, I would like THE MERCURY to prevail on Mr. Nock to tell us just what he thinks might have happened if the New Deal had had the courage to adopt a policy of Free Trade when it first picked up the reins. What effect might it have had on the State of the Union, and the cock-eyed world in general, if that one-time principle of the Democratic Party had been carried through? We might have been flooded with cheap foreign products, but as John Sharpe Williams has asked, "What of it?" What are the Relievers praying for every day?

OWEN T. STRATTON

*Salmon,
Idaho.*

SIR: I stopped reading THE MERCURY when Mencken left but some months ago picked it up again in its new size and price and am glad I did. I haven't missed the past five months and intend to keep it up. Your opinion of the New Deal and Mr. Nock's classification of all politicians exactly suits me.

But don't you think you are acting a little silly in regard to Mr. Black's appointment? I can see nothing sacred, awe-inspiring, or even really dignified in the Supreme Court. Aren't they all politicians, and if so, don't they come under Mr. Nock's classification? You don't believe by any chance, do you, that the holy spirit descended on them when they donned their black nightgowns? I hold no brief for Mr. Black. He is probably

simply an ordinary mine-run politician with more ability than the majority, but I can see nothing so awfully wrong in his Klan connection.

When the Klan was organized in Charleston, it was the time of the great Red scare. A very able young man presented it, not in the colors it afterwards assumed, but as a patriotic organization. All the first members thought themselves of the class commonly known as best citizens. They included practically all the higher paid Protestant clergymen, doctors, lawyers, bankers, merchants; all law-abiding (excusing the 18th Amendment) respectable citizens. As we understood it, Jews and Catholics were excluded, because of a mistaken idea of divided loyalty to their country, not because of race or religion. It goes without saying the original members dropped out when it was learned what the Klan really stood for. Most, I suspect, just stopped attending and paying dues. I resigned.

Isn't it possible that Mr. Black joined in the same manner, and because he was a politician couldn't get out as soon as he would have liked to? It weakens your other articles when you go too strong on one. Mind you, I agree that every word you say about Mr. Black is probably true and that your conclusions are right, but I still don't think he is any worse than the other members of the court, always excepting the two dignified, honorable, and able old Jews.

LOUIS G. JEFFRIES

*Buffalo,
West Virginia.*

SIR: Respectfully, I submit to you my impressions of your magazine. I read it from a habit formed long ago of trying to read *all* sides of as many questions as I can get around to. It will probably not make any difference to you what I think or feel about THE MERCURY, but I submit my opinions merely for what they may be worth as the reaction of a common American, educated (a little) in a liberal State university, and old enough not to be carried away with

false notions of idealism or hero-worshipping.

I sometimes wonder if God knows about you folks. He surely doesn't, for if He did He'd surely turn over the job of winning the world to your omniscient minds. He could go off on a holiday — His first one, no doubt! Specifically, I am outraged by the article by H. L. Mencken on Joe Robinson in the December issue. Now I know that Joe Robinson was a politician and not a statesman. With the main facts in Mencken's article, any well-informed, honest person would have to agree. But to put them into such a scurrilous, venom-laden attack on a dead man is the mark of a craven, diabolically hate-warped mind. No decent-minded man would kick a dead dog, much less a fellow-man, in the way that Mencken has done. Honesty is one thing; an utter lack of respect for humanity is another. If I cannot send roses, I can at least bare and bow my head in the presence of Death. Let historians at a respectable distance tell the true facts, not some hot-headed Radical steeped in vinegar and bile.

Who is Henry L. Mencken to judge anybody? Perhaps *his* soul is not immaculate. Let God judge between him and Joe Robinson.

I shall feel better if I see this letter in next month's *MERCURY*. That would at least make *one* *MERCURY* worth the twenty-five cents people pay for it.

FLOYD AMBURN

*U. S. Hospital,
Oteen, North Carolina.*



NOTES ON A KLEAGLE

SIR: Having been born and reared in an adjoining county to that of Justice Hugo Black, and having known him, his people, and environment, all my life; having opposed the Klan since its organization as the First American Fraud, and having contributed the best efforts of my life to eradicate religious, racial, and sectional hate and prejudices from the South; being a Repub-

lican and of opposite political faith to that of Justice Black, but being desirous of helping to maintain the confidence and respect of the American people in the Supreme Court of the United States, the bar of which I have the honor of being a member, my observations concerning Justice Black's Klan affiliations may be of some value to your readers.

The prime motive back of the organization of the Klan after the World War was purely commercial. The old Klan organized after the Civil War was to wrest the power of government from the hands of the recently-freed slaves, but when the Klan was organized a few years ago, the white people of the South were in complete control of every department of government. Its fundamentals of opposition to the Catholics, the Negro, and the Jew were intended as sucker bait to attract the ignorant rabble and thus get their money. I admit that it was no credit to the South, or the other sections of the country where it became so strong in numbers as to be a tremendous political force.

There is no question but what thousands of the ablest and best men of the South, who were not in sympathy with the principles and practices of the Klan, joined solely for political reasons. At first I regarded them as weaklings and demagogues, but later I came to feel that their becoming members was possibly the best thing that could have happened at the time, otherwise all of them would have been defeated, and the worse element would have been elected, and our government would have fallen into the domination of men who would have encouraged and protected religious, racial, and social intolerance and abuses, rather than restrained them.

Observing the workings of the Klan from its inception, and studying the reactions thereto, I am now satisfied that the Klan movement, especially in the South, has really contributed greatly to racial, religious, and sectional understanding and freedom. There is not ten per cent as much religious, racial,

and sectional hate and prejudice in the South today as when the Klan started, and I am convinced that the Klan activities did much to show the foolishness of such prejudice.

The Klan burnt a cross in my yard some years ago and threatened to mob me because I prosecuted a gang of hoodlums who whipped a Catholic boy, but their whipping of the boy, and threatening me, destroyed the Klan for several years in this county.

Within the past year or two, those who wish to continue to commercialize men's ignorance and prejudice, and realizing that there is not now in the South enough hate and prejudice towards the Catholics, the Negro, and the Jews for them to exploit, are trying to revive the Klan by appealing to ignorance of, and hate and prejudice towards, the Communists. Of course the greatest contribution they can make to Communism is to continue their campaign. The Communists never have been, nor will they ever be, worse or more infamous than the Klan. The element who make the best Klansmen are the most fruitful seed for Communism in the South. Smart boys who could paint Communism with a little emotional superstition and religious voodooism, could sell the Klan element in the South a carload of bunk, and make a fortune out of it. If I were looking for a first-class fraud to get rich with, I would dress Communism up in graveyard-rabbit clothing, come South, and get my wad.

I know Justice Black, and I know that he is neither a Klansman, Communist, or Radical at heart, and if he lives, he will prove to be a rational, progressive, Constitutional American of such a character that some of the Wild Boys now in Washington will term "conservative" or "reactionary"; and no Catholic, Negro, Jew, or individualist who loves America and its fundamentals of Constitutional Democracy, need have any fear of Justice Black. The American people have no conception of the vicissitudes of adversity Justice Black had to overcome in his early life. Until he was charged with the sacred mandate of judicial responsibility, he

had to be a political genius to survive. This is what enabled him to navigate the destructive rapids of the political philosophy that has disgraced Alabama and the South since the Civil War, and gave to him the opportunity which he now has to prove himself a great American.

E. E. CALLAWAY

*Lakeland,
Florida.*



FLEA BITES

SIR: It will no doubt gratify Mr. Seaman, who wrote "Ninety-Nine Per Cent British" in September's issue, to learn that we do have the *pulex irritans*, the common flea, as well as bedbugs. Although whether we were guilty of introducing this pest to the British Isles or vice versa is a moot point.

From the day we arrived in California and mother called a doctor to look at my measles, which turned out to be flea bites, our lives have been dedicated to holding aloof from these creatures. My abstinence from the movies is as much from the dread of acquiring fleas as horror of the pictures shown. And to this day all the beds in the house are furnished with, in addition to springs and mattresses, fragrant branches of hay and eucalyptus as a prophylaxis against that insect which causes as much insomnia as our modern nerves.

U. AIGELTINGER

*San Francisco,
California.*



OPEN FORUM PERSONALS

SIR: Mr. Ryan, in his recent letter to THE MERCURY, showed such a wealth of misinformation in regard to the Civil War and was so vehement in his assertions, that I cannot refrain from giving a Damyankee's version of that affair (a version which used to be quite popular, but now is never heard). In fact, Mr. Ryan is so misinformed and so vehement that I would rather think he was joking, were it not for the fact that I have

met so many people — mostly Northerners — who subscribe to his sentiments, cuss by cuss.

Mr. Ryan makes the common mistake of assuming that the North fought to abolish slavery. Only the Abolitionists were against slavery, and they were in the minority. But like so many other minorities (the secessionists down South, for example) they made a tremendous amount of noise, convinced outsiders that they were the voice of the people, and bullied the majority into accepting their dictates.

It has been said so often that it seems incredible there are people who don't realize that the war was actually an unavoidable clash between two civilizations, the conservative civilization of the South and the progressive civilization of the North; between two concepts of government, that of State's Rights and that of Federal Sovereignty. Personally, I think the Southern civilization *was* the better one. But it could never have lasted in a world rapidly becoming mechanized. Swift destruction was probably better than slow deterioration.

Mr. Ryan says invasion is a crime: is he unaware of the fact that America was built by invading the lands of the Indians and the Mexicans? Incidentally, the soldiers in the Mexican War were far more ruffianly than Sherman's much-maligned followers and they were mostly all Southerners. The Constitution gives the President full authority to suppress insurrection, and as such Secession was considered in 1861; it also says that no State should form an alliance with any other State. We are told we should not condemn the South until we have heard their viewpoint; but we convict the North without a hearing.

The 1861 Southerners were miles ahead of us in hatred. The United States armies weren't down South to inflict their "hatred" on the South; they were South because they had to be. Secession was war. If Fort Sumter hadn't opened the actual military phase, something else would have. Are these people who defend Secession so naïve as to believe

that the United States and the Confederacy could have existed peacefully side by side? Don't they realize that endless disputes would have arisen over boundary lines, water routes, trade rights, a million matters? Don't they realize that both countries would have claimed and settled the Western territories, making a bleeding Kansas out of all the trans-Mississippi? Don't they realize that if the South had been allowed to secede, States and counties would have left and re-joined the Union or Confederacy at will, or formed new countries? These facts are evident to a grade-school child; it seems incredible that anyone can be so backward as to deny them.

ELOISE R. LEHNERT

*Blairstown,
New Jersey.*

SIR: As one who considers your publication one of the few remaining proponents of the Americanism which most of us seem to be losing sight of in a forest of other Isms, I resent the criticism of your editorial ability by Miss White and Miss Doherty, in their letters as published in THE OPEN FORUM of December. How do I know that it is *Miss White* and *Miss Doherty*? Only unmarried women resent the earthly dramaturgies of Thomas Wolfe and James M. Cain, and some such thought — confess! — must have motivated your placing of the comments of these emotionally frustrated ladies under the apt caption: "Dat Old Debbil Sex".

PETER W. MOURER, JR.

*North Sacramento,
California.*

SIR: With reference to the predictions of Dr. Hugo Erichsen's friends, may I say that he is being misled. In this I have reference to the true church. If the president emeritus will check up on his history he will find that the practice of cremation has been condemned by three Roman decrees. The first, on May 16, 1886, forbids Catholics to join cremation societies or to order their bodies cremated; the second, December 15, 1886,

deprives such Catholics of Christian burial; the third, July 27, 1892, forbids priests to give them the Last Sacraments. These decrees of the Holy Office condemn cremation, not as contrary to the divine or natural law, but as "a detestable pagan practice, introduced by men of doubtful faith", who aim at lessening reverence for the dead.

Dr. Erichsen can check these figures. Although cremation was on the increase between the years 1872 to 1900, the annual average in the United States was only 13,230. Fortunately there is little danger of it conquering the modern world, for it contradicts a sentiment too strongly imbedded in the human heart, and too strongly associated with the customs of centuries to be eradicated by flimsy arguments drawn from pseudo-science or blatant infidelity.

O. JOSEPH BONDY

*Windsor, Ontario,
Canada.*

SIR: J. Price of Palo Alto reminds all readers that Henry II married a divorced woman, which should set a precedent for the much-discussed case of David Windsor. Mr. Price has forgotten that Edward VIII was head of a church which refused to countenance divorce. That same church was not even formed in the days of Henry II, who belonged to the Roman Catholic Church.

P. G. Ingram, Jr., certainly talks like a junior who had studied under Big Bill of Chicago. Junior would do a lot of good by writing more letters and tearing them up.

SAMUEL CARSON

*Rome,
New York.*

SIR: I was quite astonished at the number of persons (mostly female) who took exceptions to the article by Mr. Peveral Peake in the August number on "Why the South Hates Sherman". Certainly the South has little cause for complaint against the North now, or since the beginning of the "Late Unpleasantness". What few people seem to

understand is that this attitude on the part of the South is really one of the most profitable lines of endeavor it has ever had. By continually making a poor mouth, they have succeeded in making the balance of the country believe they are actually being deprived of their due share of the national economy when, as a matter of fact, they have always enjoyed a great deal more than their just share, climaxed under the New Deal where the South controls the Federal Government. Yet for this control they pay very little. For every dollar they pay in federal taxes, they regularly extract at least ten in federal bounties so that it is not bad business.

Apparently these writers have either forgotten or they have never read the series of three articles which appeared in *THE MERCURY* six years ago (September, October, and November, 1931) "The Worst American State" by Charles Angoff and H. L. Mencken. If they will take the trouble to look over these numbers they will see that Mr. Peake was very mild in his strictures. However, Messrs. Angoff and Mencken went to the trouble of fortifying their findings with formidable tables of statistics — hard, dry reading, to be sure, and the kind of stuff that does not lend itself to florid oratory or heated emotions, but from which there is no appeal. From this statistical study made six years ago the conclusion seems inescapable that Sherman was not far wrong.

ROYAL P. JARVIS

*Michoacán,
Mexico.*

SIR: Dwight Stebbins (his name perfectly characterizes this Minnesotan) who objects to prose on sex because "sex is purely animal and beneath the dignity of your magazine", rouses my animal ire. Unless a man is purely animal he is impurely animal, in which case he is both unhealthy and unwholesome and as such preoccupied with money and averse to paying his share of the useful taxes.

The way to keep pure, though sexual, is

to avoid chastity with an iron will, for chastity is to the glandular system what constipation is to the alimentary, and there are plenty of shriveled, wispy, and waspish Puritans to prove it. Granted that the inverted upbringing of women in America makes it difficult to find any enthusiastically co-operative, whence the necessity of will-power to face their cranky music; but the wise will make nothing of that while there is plasmic superabundance to be voided pleasingly. As we are, so we must be—sexual stoppage has always led to war, for women know from history that soldiers stop at nothing and all their makeshift rigors go down before them.

Accursed is that ostrich, humanity, whose hidden head prevents its acknowledgment of its wholesome animal nature.

C. B. LOOMIS

*Manhattan Beach,
California.*



THEY ASKED FOR IT

SIR: Recollecting the name-calling furies of the '36 Presidential campaign, an increasing inclination may now be noted among our more impassioned economic Liberals to assign the squalors of the New Deal to the collectivist malevolence and individual animal magnetism of the New Dealers. The more impressionable super-Babbitts of 1938, and their more vociferous wives and sales managers, seem actually on the point, as their folklore hardens into theology, of swallowing the fairy story that Drs. Roosevelt and Tugwell were able, with malice aforethought, to fracture the Democratic platform and usher in the Communist 1933 Revolution merely because the Sentinels of the Republic happened to be temporarily on detached duty in the cellars, guarding the gold hoards from the customers. In other words, if the story of our times is to be written by the men who know Bruce Barton, it quite possibly will go into the Groton history books that the New Deal trick was turned and the institutions of the

Republic curdled into Marxism by a band of ruthless conspirators who chose to strike at the moment when the valiant business individualists of the land were gripped in their private withdrawing rooms with the agonies of an epochal bellyache.

I am not privy to the conspiratorial minutes of Drs. Roosevelt and Tugwell, so it is a trifle difficult at this moment to assay how much of the lurid economics of 1933 was "planned", how much was accidental, and how much of it represented the welling-up of inaugural profundities in the epiglottis. But the question of the source from which the conspirators received their main bundles of comfort and their chief detachments of starry-eyed barricade verbalists, is not a matter of a privy nature. It was from the Bronx-cheering soldiers of the current counter-revolution themselves. The fact is, that not only was every Chamber of Commerce spellbinder shouting for a dictator in the 1932-33 Winter, but the captains of industry, when they did not happen to be dodging creditors or jumping out of windows, were repeating the cry in an even more solemn whinny. Business was scared, not so much by the shock to its vanity as by the thought of the hellfire awaiting it if ever the banks were allowed to stay crashed. It wanted to be saved so ardently that it did not care how much salvation cost or how many of its freedoms of the will it had to abandon to Providence and his vicar in the White House for the duration of the Come-to-Jesus moment.

As in the major matter of whether candy stores and radium canneries were to be ruled by a supreme collectivist, so *in petto*. The jittering gentlemen who protested that their government should save them from the machinations of bankers, brokers, and utilities-pyramiders, that the public Treasury relieve them of their obligations to support their Community Chests, restore purchasing power to their customers, and solvency to their mortgagees, were not, in any recognizable sense, as one met them on the elevators, emissaries of Moscow. With un-

influential exceptions, they were Elks and Chamber of Commerce members in good standing, and their demands for the higher security were delivered in the golden tones of first-class sales talk.

Business was in a jam, in short, and as has been its traditional custom under these trying circumstances, turned to government with the pathetic shriek that it save individualism by new adventures in collectivism. A good case could even be made out that Dr. Roosevelt was fairly modest about it. He emerged from the scramble of bright ideas merely as a somewhat excessively over-extended administrator. If he had listened to the Commerce-Chambered hysterics of his bright inaugural period, he could have been a real *Führer*.

In all this correction of the record there is no reason why business should fancy what the New Deal has done to it. Capitalists on previous occasions have bought Peruvian bonds and carloads of spoiled beans without having had partisanship for the seller noticeably titillated, and there is no reason why they should not do what God gives them wisdom for—to throw Dr. Roosevelt's prescriptions into the ash can if they appear to be upsetting the gastric balances.

But it might prove beneficial in its final effects if business should remember, when the next jam comes, who ran screaming to the Great Practitioner. In some future twinges from the chronic ailment, the statesmen of Rugged Individualism may ask for a further dosage of collectivism—and get it at the end of a gun butt.

HAROLD J. MASON

Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania.



IN DEFENSE OF TANKS

SIR: Before proceeding to the usual practice of criticizing your articles, I wish to say that I have found the military articles in *THE MERCURY* to be unusually sound and Mr. Conway's is no exception. But it seems to me that he has misinterpreted the case for the tanks.

He infers that the main strength in tank warfare lies in the heavy armed, slow-moving infantry tanks. But in fact the pro-tank men look to the light tanks, tanks which are light enough to cross any commercial bridge in safety, which move much faster than the speeds indicated by Mr. Conway, and which will probably carry no heavier armament than a .5 caliber machine-gun or a one-pounder.

Cavalry has always been the decisive arm in warfare. It was precisely the fact that the machine-gun made the use of cavalry impossible in 1914-18 that made that war so indecisive and costly. In reality, a tank is merely a man on horseback with his ability to protect himself, his speed, and his firepower immensely multiplied. As in other times, after the artillery has blasted an opening on the enemy's flank, this new mechanized cavalry will pour through and hit at the enemy's rear, thus bringing about the decision. Mobility is, now as always, the vital factor.

True, this mechanized cavalry will be vulnerable to artillery. But reduce the factors in the equation to eighteenth-century conditions, at which time cavalry was at its height. There you had a man on horseback, without protection, a perfect target, able to move no faster than a gallop even on good ground. Similarly the artillery—muzzle-loading, slow-firing, and slow-moving. This eighteenth-century artillery, well placed and firing grape, was able time and again to shatter cavalry charges and inflict large losses. Yet in the majority of cases the cavalry succeeded. Why? Because the cavalry was mobile, the artillery fixed. The gunners could only fire so many rounds before the horsemen were on them. No matter how high the cavalry loss there would be some left to close—and against these few the gunners, tied to their comparatively immobile weapon and without protection, were helpless.

Add the twentieth-century technical improvements to these eighteenth-century cavalry-artillery factors, and I believe the

proportion remains the same. Artillery will inflict heavy losses on the new mechanized horsemen, but in the majority of cases the latter will triumph.

There is, in fact, only one way to combat tanks, and that, of course, is to use more tanks. For those who doubt I suggest a trip to Fort Knox, Kentucky, and observation of the maneuvers of the United States First Cavalry Mechanized.

H. S. FORD
2nd Lt., F.A.-Res.

Cleveland,
Ohio.

THE DEMI-TASSE

SIR: Many readers of Mr. Vaillant's article about the French may wonder why we use the expression "demi-tasse" for a small cup of black coffee when it is not known in that sense in France — Mr. Vaillant says that it isn't, and he is quite right. But less than a hundred years ago, it was a humorous poem of the first half of the nineteenth century called *Paris à Cinq Heures du Soir* (I quote from memory and it may be *Quatre Heures*) represents patrons of cafés calling to the waiter, "*Ma glace! ma glace! ma demi-tasse!*" and in Balzac's *Le Cousin Pons* (1844), a woman says "*Cibot, cours chercher deux demi-tasses au café Turc.*" When they arrive, they are described as "*deux excellentes tasses de café.*" The great 19th Century Larousse dictionary defines "Demi-tasse" as follows: "Ordinary cup of black coffee, smaller than the kind used for coffee with milk. Contents of said cup: *To take a Demi-tasse.*" The 20th Century Larousse gives a shorter version of this definition with the remark "Obsolete".

Mr. Vaillant is ironically too hard on French telephones and Paris water: the latter is good to drink. And there is such a thing as French toast here, for the language has an expression for it and Frenchmen who have had it in America tell me that it exists.

CLIFFORD H. BOISELL

Paris,
France.

IN DEFENSE OF H L M

SIR: The recent and very violent attacks on H. L. Mencken which have appeared both in your letter department and elsewhere are excellent examples of the insults an intelligent and gifted man who dares to speak his mind in the great republic unfailingly receives. It is an old story. Edgar Allen Poe, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Dreiser and O'Neill were all in their day commended as immoral and un-American, while Bryan, Wilson, Coolidge and Billy Sunday were national idols. Today Mencken, a literary artist of deep understanding and the ability to express it, fearless fighter and a fine writer, is regarded as an enemy of progress while a third-rate, radio-roaring, rabble-rousing politician, one F. D. R., whose relentlessness in taxing his people and whose mania for personal power are accepted as virtues, is hero and savior in one. Public taste hasn't changed. The Comrades, New Dealers and the Bible Belt join hands and squawk in mutual ignorance. The American goes round and round.

THOMAS QUINN CURTISS

Ibuzs,
Budapest.

SIR: If I am not being too something or other, I suggest you drop the contents of your entertaining, stimulating, and thought-provoking journal and substitute nothing but letters from irate readers. Those Mencken critics and their orchids are a scream. I get as many laughs from them as H. L. M. hands me in his devastating blasts. And even though a mammy singer has been so designated, I think he deserves the title of the world's greatest entertainer.

R. C. O'BRIEN

New York City.

SIR: Mr. Mencken's pen seems to stir up a good many readers, but his articles were the means of making me a buyer of the most thought-provoking publication on the North American continent. His journalistic

style — witty, trenchant, and sometimes iconoclastic, is only one side of his skillful presentation of facts. May he live long, and be a constant contributor to THE MERCURY.

FRED C. MEERES

Winnipeg,
Canada.



AUTOPSY ON THE MERCURY

SIR: Your magazine may be studied statistically from the angle of social viewpoint. In the six issues which I have at hand, I ran through each copy and listed all articles of appreciable length which had a social slant or philosophy. Re-reading these twenty-three articles as a group made their effect more impressive than when I originally read them as the magazine arrived each month. Based on the selected articles, I am able to make a representative summary of things which you and your writers are for and against. On none of these things do your authors disagree.

Things Advocated

1. The Middle Ages, or anything not more recent than Junker Pomerania or Planter Virginia.
2. Monarchy.
3. Economic nationalism.
4. Within the nation, economic laissez-faire.
5. Craft unionism as a conservative force in Labor.
6. Suppression of the Communist Party.
7. Disfranchisement of the unemployed on Relief.

Things Opposed

1. The Progressives in the United States Senate.
2. John L. Lewis and industrial unionism.
3. Socialism.
4. Communism.
5. Mayor LaGuardia.
6. Free Trade to include Hull's tariff policy.

7. Social Security legislation.
8. Compulsory bank insurance.
9. Resettlement of people living in permanently depressed areas.
10. Government development of electric power.
11. The Newspaper Guild as now organized.
12. Consumers' unions to raise safety levels on products offered for sale.
13. Collective international security.

There is a suggestive harmony about this whole list of likes and dislikes. I believe that if any man will examine himself carefully and honestly, he will find plenty of asininity within. I recommend such an introspective study to your staff. I am confident that if you undertake it, you will obtain positive results.

DANIEL M. WILSON

Fort Mills,
Philippine Islands.



NEW WORDS FOR OLD

SIR: Anent Mr. Aikman's article, "Devil-Baiters in Politics", it may be that in no respect has American Radicalism more adroitly outsmarted the conservative opposition during recent years than in its nomenclature. While conservatism continues to stagger along under the weight of the devitalized war cries of former years, the Leftists have come up with a whole new glossary of verbal spotlights. The drab old Radical philosophy has been given a daub of glistening new 1938 catchwords.

There is shrewdness behind the act. In a literate democracy, it is the slogan-maker who is the uncrowned king. The old slogans and key-words of Socialism, under the impact of counter-propaganda, had become little better than epithets. Nothing was easier in American politics than to discredit a Leftist by branding the designation of "Red" or "Communist" upon him. Americans had long ago made up their minds that these were unpleasant words, and the propagandist who attempted to

make converts under such tarnished mastheads confronted a task more hopeless than that of Sisyphus.

Accordingly, we hear little current talk among the more enlightened Leftists of such familiar objectives as Socialism, Communism, or the Marxian Revolution. Instead, the intelligent Radicals have now encased their old bill of goods in the glistening new cellophane of "The Economy of Abundance". Like so many of Mr. Stuart Chase's inspirations (it should be remembered that he also gave Dr. Roosevelt the title of his New Deal) the phrase has a pat, persuasive quality about it which disarms opposition. Who would be so hardy as to oppose Abundance? And when it is discovered that the new slogan is merely a false-face for the wheezy old Socialist cause, the involuntary reaction of the discoverer is to feel that perhaps Socialism is not so bad after all if it carries with it such an enticing connotation.

There are other attractive new mouthfuls in the Socialist slogan book. There is "Production For Use" which has become the battle cry of Mr. Upton Sinclair, Mr. Alfred M. Bingham, and Mr. Thomas R. Amlie. There is "The Planned Society" of Mr. Rexford G. Tugwell and his fellow-adventurers on the *New Republic*. Dr. George S. Counts and his *Social Frontier* group have conjured up half a dozen seductive new titles, the most buoyant of which are "Democratic Collectivism" and "The New Social Order". Even Mr. Browder's doctrinaire Communists of the *Partei* seldom use the word *Communist* any more in their soapbox harangues, but invite the workers to rally to a "Farmer-Labor Party".

American conservatives may well learn an instructive lesson from all of this Radical window-dressing. It is the Left which has sensed the temper of the times more truly, in this instance, than the Right. Everywhere there is a deep yearning among the masses for new spiritual adventures and for new,

changed social alternatives. Conservatism, if it is wise, will at least go as far as the Radicals in placating this time-spirit with a new and reburnished terminology. The old truths will lose none of their vitality by translation into the living language of a perplexed generation.

KARL HARRIS

*Bronx,
New York.*

~*~

MEN VS. MACHINES

SIR: The advent of the mechanical cotton picker has aroused the ancient debate: are machines the friend or foe of mankind? Ancient kings destroyed the spinning wheels so that human labor would not be displaced; the nineteenth century witnessed riots against Cartwright's spinning jenny by outraged laborers who thought it an abomination of the Devil, and even today men are unable to conceive an adjustment to cotton pickers and other devices which ostensibly displace man in industry.

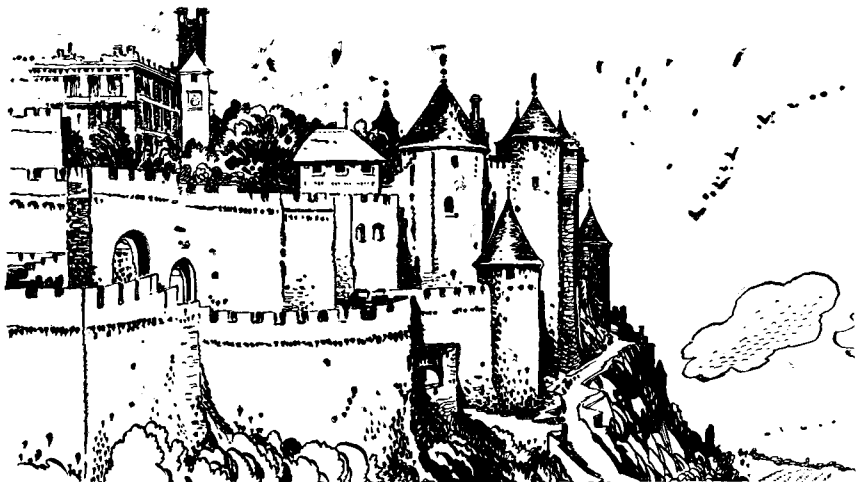
The attack on the spinning jenny was indeed a mistake. Men who used slow hand-labor were unable to purchase shirts and other clothing, but with the coming of this great invention, men and women were able to live more healthful, comfortable lives. It has always been so; machines have produced untold benefits to mankind.

It is our knowledge of social adjustments that is rusty and decrepit at times. Hear the voice of a prominent Southern politician who proposes to meet the change by legislating this machine out of existence. Natural science surges forward to new glories; machines do not displace labor, they produce new labor and bring leisure and comfort to mankind. Would that our knowledge of social science and government were as progressive!

FRANCIS JOSEPH BASSETT

*Ridgefield,
Connecticut.*

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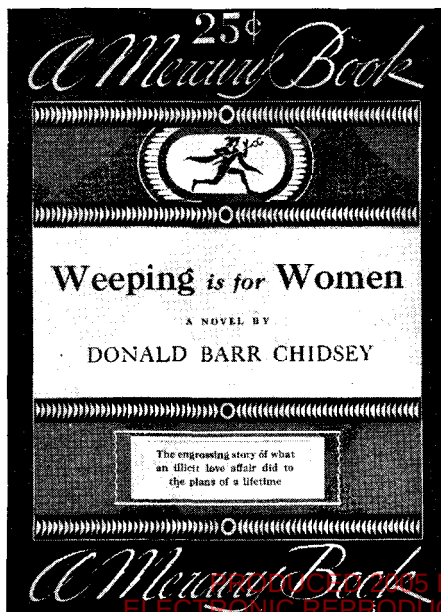
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The American Mercury

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ON ALL NEWSSTANDS



THE CHECK LIST

(Continued from front adv't section, p. iv)

very reasonable account—perhaps too reasonable to sit well with the current anti-Mussolini school—of Italy's design for African empire, as evidenced by the rape of Ethiopia. The author had access to many documents and many notables during his research: he has judiciously assembled his findings in a clear-cut book, the gist of which is that Italy is ready to call a halt on territorial expansion. "Only megalomania could send her in search of fresh conquests at the moment," says Mr. Martelli. "And there is no evidence, in spite of rumors, that Mussolini is mad." Which leaves Rome's diplomats with only the British-Italian squabble on their hands.

★★★ THE SOD-HOUSE FRONTIER, by Everett Dick. \$5.00. *Appleton-Century*. The period 1854-1890 witnessed our American migration westward, with countless hardships and disappointments, no area being more severe upon its pioneers than the "Great American Desert". It was, said certain well-traveled experts, unfit for habitation. But today, not so many years after, this region of Nebraska, Kansas, and the Dakotas is a rich and valuable land indeed. Dr. Dick's carefully compiled volume depicts the hitherto obscure life of the "sod-house" homesteaders, and recounts their achievements toward a status in democracy.

★★★ THE FEDERAL UNION, by John D. Hicks. \$4.75. *Houghton Mifflin*. Of the history of our country—social, economic, and political—from the New World era to 1865, with observations, well-taken and lucid, on the development of a race. Not a textbook in the academic sense, yet of value to students and historians, and illustrated with maps, photographs, and line drawings.

★★★ THE UNITED STATES AND THE DISRUPTION OF THE SPANISH EMPIRE, 1810-1822, by Charles Carroll Griffin. \$3.75. *Columbia University Press*. A drawing together of available data on a somewhat neglected historical subject—one which has certain perspective in its bearings

THE CHECK LIST

on neutrality in the Western Hemisphere today. In 1810, as in 1938, the United States' foreign policies were much to be wondered at. And why not? Our diplomats and Presidents have never been noted for their consistency.

★★★ THE PATROON'S DOMAIN, by S.G. Nissenson. \$3.75. *Columbia University Press*. How the patroon system of the Dutch took root in New York, under the sponsorship of the West India Company; and how it disintegrated under British economic and political influence. A scholarly contribution, carefully prepared and documented, of interest to students of early Americana.

BIOGRAPHY

★★★★ MADAME CURIE, by Eve Curie. Translated by Vincent Sheean. \$3.50. *Doubleday, Doran*. Not intentionally a love story, but a sympathetic biography; yet the love theme will not down, for Marie and Pierre Curie learned much from each other, and from the happy simplicity of their life they went forth to find great things, and found them. It is a moving story, this saga of radium. It is told ably, without sensationalism, by the daughter of the two eminent scientists. As a readable biography, few books of the times carry such clarity and warmth.

★★★ THIS IS MY STORY, by Eleanor Roosevelt. \$3.00. *Harpers*. Candid and not unlively memoirs of the First Lady, in which is traced, step by step, the processes which transformed an ugly duckling, much burdened by an inferiority complex, into one of the greatest extroverts of our times. But there is also material here to indicate that Mrs. Roosevelt's present "social consciousness" is not so different from the Lady Bountiful spirit, fashionable in Victoria's day, and that this trait was inevitable in one who labeled herself a "Puritan" in youth. No President's wife has ever written a more revealing biography: it should be read — and analyzed — by every adult American to whom the family now in residence at the White House constitutes a riddle.

(Continued on page xii)



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THE CHECK LIST

(Continued from page xi)

★★★ **WILLIAM SAMUEL JOHNSON**, by George C. Groce, Jr. \$2.75. *Columbia University Press*. Lawyer Johnson of Connecticut was a wise and tolerant man. He was well versed in the politics and international affairs of his day. Also, he was a legislator of no mean talent. So it came about that he was consulted at length by the framers of the Constitution, and gave to that document much of his mind. Mr. Groce draws a careful portrait of this Yankee Founding Father: an entertaining biography, helping to round out the early history of the Republic.

★★★ **CHINESE WOMEN: YESTERDAY AND TODAY**, by Florence Ayscough. \$3.50. *Houghton Mifflin*. Chinese culture is much in the news these days, and rightly so. Here is a scholarly consideration of China's women, ancient and modern, with brief biographies of the most outstanding, and translations from their writings. Out of such material is history made and maps redrawn. Statesmen have always been susceptible to their womenfolk, in the Orient as elsewhere.

MISCELLANEOUS

★★★ **THE CHANGING AMERICAN NEWSPAPER**, by Herbert Brucker. \$1.50. *Columbia University Press*. Many comments on the present state of our journalism and many suggestions as to how certain evils may be corrected, with emphasis on the typographical side. It is clearly true, as the author contends, that the American newspaper has shown little change in the past two decades; hence, it would seem time to Take Steps. But the main problem now facing the trade is to evaluate and control propaganda; and no one has a solution at hand save the Newspaper Guild, which believes only in its own specious propaganda. Until this question is scotched, other discussions may be considered secondary. Mr. Brucker's technical treatise is timely and constructive as far as it goes: there is room now for a second book—one dealing solely with journalism *vs.* politics.

★ **OF ALL PLACES**, by Patience, Richard, and Johnny Abbe. \$2.00. *Stokes*. They must be lovely and interesting children. They write like it. Isn't it about time they went to school?



EVA BYRON (*The Wall*), who lives in Tampa, Florida, is a singer as well as a writer. **WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN** (*Stalin: Portrait of a Degenerate*), chief Far Eastern correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor* in Tokyo, was formerly Moscow correspondent for the same newspaper. His latest book is *Japan Over Asia* (*Little, Brown*). **HOWARD MCKINLEY CORNING** (*Never Deny a Mountain*) lives in Oregon and is the author of two volumes of verse, *These People* (*Humphries*) and *The Mountain in the Sky* (*Vinal*). **EDMUND GILLIGAN** (*Death in Halifax*) is a member of the editorial staff of the *New York Sun*. **SARA HENDERSON HAY** (*In Flood and Dearth*) works in the Rare Books department of Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. **FRED LAPE** (*Bean Poles*), a former instructor of English at Cornell and Stanford, now lives on a farm in central New York State. **JAMES K. MARTEL** (*Washington Press Conference*) is a former newspaper correspondent at the Capital. **EUGENE PHARO** (*Gov. Earle of Pennsylvania*) lives in New Jersey and is a special writer for the *Washington Post*. **ELIOT B. SPALDING** (*Sports Writers Are Always Wrong*), who spent nine years in the newspaper business, is now secretary of the Cambridge (Massachusetts) Taxpayers' Association. **HAROLD LORD VARNEY** (*The Case Against the Labor Board*) is the well-known authority on the Radical movement in America. **MARTHA WITTE** (*Help Wanted*) came to New York City ten years ago as an immigrant, in search of work. This is her first published writing.

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*** indicate an outstanding performance, ** a competent performance, * an acceptable performance. ††† denote exceptional recording, †† efficient recording, † poor recording.

ORCHESTRAL

***†† *Das Lied von der Erde*, Mahler: (Columbia, seven 12-inch records, \$14). A first recording of a score which even Mahler's detractors are willing to concede a considerable share of attention. Others will find this an ideal introduction to his works, since there is present in tangible form — the words of the Chinese poems he has set — the philosophic impulse that is frequently obscure in his symphonies. It would be difficult to conceive of a more sympathetic performance than this one by Bruno Walter, with Kerstin Thorborg and Charles Kullmann as the vocalists. Though the recording was made during an actual performance in Vienna, the balance of orchestra and soloists is well-preserved, and there are few extraneous noises.

***††† *Mignon Overture*, Thomas: (RCA-Victor, one 12-inch record, \$1.50). Brilliant recording and an enamoring performance by Arthur Fielder and the Boston "Pops" Orchestra give distinction to this version of Thomas' succulent tunes.

**†† *Alceste Overture*, Gluck: (Victor, one 12-inch record, \$1.50). A valuable addition to the sparse library of recorded Gluck. Adrian Boult directs the B.B.C. Orchestra in a sober and well-outlined performance of the sturdy score.

CHAMBER MUSIC

***†† *Voces Intimae (Opus 56)*, and *Symphony No. 6*, Sibelius: (RCA-Victor, seven 12-inch records, \$10). Another release of the Sibelius Society, especially important for its first phonographic presentation of the composer's only string quartet. One of his more representative works, it is also one of the most accessible, a score to be respected

RECORDED MUSIC

even were the composer not the subject of a fad. It is superbly played by the Budapest Quartet. The symphony of the album is more esoteric, characterized by a sparseness of outline that may be symptomatic either of great concentration or intellectual anemia. George Schneevogt conducts the Finnish National Orchestra.

SPEECH

***** *King Richard II (Landing Scene, Before Flint Castle, Deposition Scene, and Prison Scene), Shakespeare*: (Columbia, five 12-inch records, \$10). A considerable portion of the memorable production in which Maurice Evans was featured last winter, now on tour. Even without the merits of Evans' superb voice and intellectual fire, these would be the finest dramatic records yet made; with them, they are indeed unexampled. He is aided by a supporting company headed by Abraham Sofaer.

DANCE

The Man I Love and *Avalon* (Victor, 10-inch record, \$.75). A Gershwin tribute by the Goodman Quartet, in which swing almost attains an elegaic character. On the reverse, a feat almost as noteworthy is accomplished—a fresh approach to one of the most venerable of popular tunes.

Yours and Mine, and *Sun Showers* (Decca, 10-inch record, \$.35). Two bright tunes from *Broadway Melody*, in which Louis Armstrong does much to redeem his recent decline. However this is not managed by torrid horn-blowing, but through his extraordinary gifts as an entertainer, particularly in the two vocal choruses.

Am I Dreaming? and *Burglar's Revenge* (Victor, 10-inch record, \$.75). The *raison d'être* of this disk is *Am I Dreaming?*, a hilarious take-off on the manners of such orchestral personalities as Shep Fields, Guy Lombardo, Eddy Duchin, etc. Sophisticated, but brimming with lovely malice. The performers are not listed, but the credit has universally been bestowed on the Tommy Dorsey band.

Azuquita and *Havana's Calling Me* (Victor, 10-inch, \$.75). Rhumbas by that magnifico of the manner, Xavier Cugat. Neither tune is prepossessing, but that is no handicap for Cugat and his men.

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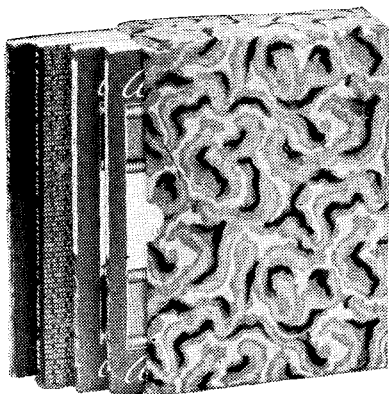
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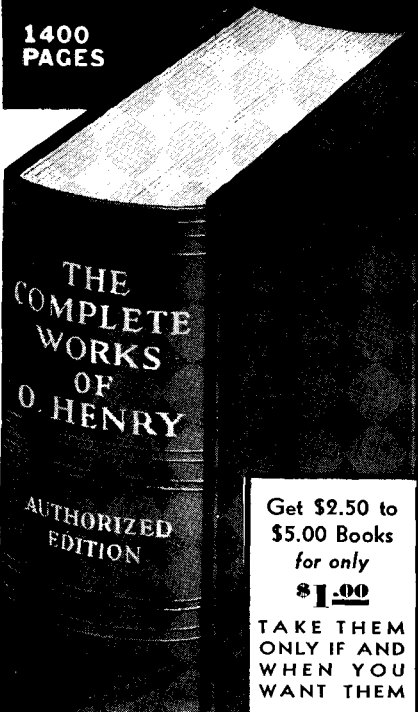
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